# "THE DARK PEOPLE"

## RUSSIA'S CRISIS

ERNEST POOLE

"THE DARK PEOPLE"

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KATHERINE BRESHKOVSKY OR "BABUSHKA," AS SHE IS CALLED, "LITTLE GRANDMOTHER" OF THE REVOLUTION. SHE SPENT NEARLY 40 YEARS OF HER LIFE IN PRISON OR IN SIBERIA, AND IS THE MOST DEARLY BELOVED OF ALL THE REVOLUTIONISTS

# "THE DARK PEOPLE"

## RUSSIA'S CRISIS

DK265
P6

BY
ERNEST POOLE
Author of "The Harbor," "His Family,"
"His Second Wife"

New York
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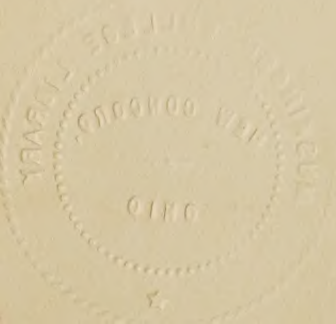

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# "THE DARK PEOPLE"

## INTRODUCTION

I shall never forget the Nevsky, the principal street of Petrograd, as it looked to me in the summer of 1917, in those hot and sultry days and through those long White Nights of the North, when the strange uncertain greyish light slowly deepened into a midnight dusk. A long wide thoroughfare with dirty wooden pavement, in the centre was a double line of overhead trolleys, and on either hand moved dense processions of traffic: military automobiles, motor cycles, ambulance cars and enormous army trucks, countless little open cabs and peasant-carts with huge wooden yokes over the necks of the horses, carts heavy laden with bags of grain, the carcasses of sheep and hogs and many other food supplies. Groups of horsemen passed in the throng, Cossacks with their jaunty caps and curly hair. Occasionally a rich limousine passed, but this was a rare exception. Gone from the streets were the brilliancy and sparkle and pomp of former days.

With a harsh clamour of voices, soldiers and civilians passed: some soldiers neat and orderly and quick to salute the officers; others carelessly tramp-

ing along in dirty boots and uniforms, with an air of derisive indifference as the officers passed them by. Many of these officers had gaunt faces with grim eyes. Others, especially younger men in spruce dashing uniforms, smart capes and glittering decorations, came talking and laughing gaily, lending colour and life to the street. People from all over Russia were here — smart young cadets and students, Cossacks, Georgians, Tartars, gipsy women, Black Sea sailors, Finnish peasants, Little Russians. Groups of wounded soldier boys passed with Red Cross nurses on their way to the movies. There were women beggars with babes in their arms, and there were chattering girls and boys; there were scowling spectacled men who argued intensely as they walked; there were crowds of theatregoers, prostitutes and newsboys; there were endless government employes in uniforms of many kinds. All Russia seemed to be surging by.

There was little or no disorder. As though by some deep instinct, these throngs of people kept the peace. The militia police of the Revolution were a meagre looking force, and one might have expected all kinds of crimes with violence. It was not so. There were immense stores of vodka here, but I saw no drunkenness and you could not buy a drink. The price of fire wood was high and mounting higher every week, but I saw huge piles of paving blocks left all night on lonely streets with no watchman guarding them, and there were no pilferers about.

There was disorganization in the whole system of supplies. To buy bread or tea or sugar or shoes, the people had to stand in long lines. I saw these lines on every hand. Many of them formed at night and stood there until morning. I saw them standing in the rain for hours to get cigarettes. They were always quiet, orderly. They would have long discussions there about freedom, Russia, humanity, God. With that almost tragic patience which seems to be a part of the Slavs, they kept the peace without the law.

And yet there was ceaseless chaos, for behind these stoic faces and beneath these small events of life I could feel the town seething with ideas of war and revolution, change. I saw crowds in front of war bulletins reading of Russian disasters. At midnight they would still be there, with the yellow glare from the newspaper windows striking down on their upturned faces and their anxious gleaming eyes. In one such midnight gathering I met a woman of middle age, who said quietly to my interpreter, "My son is an officer. I have not heard from him in seven weeks. And since then his troops have mutinied."

I felt the constant presence of numberless personal tragedies and of a nation in suspense. War or peace, which should it be? The throngs would eddy here and there around some speaker on the curb and instantly grow all intent, listening absorbedly. Meetings, meetings, meetings — on the streets, in

halls and theatres and in stifling little rooms — where by the hour people discussed the problems of war and revolution: military, political, religious, economic. Delegations from all over Russia kept pouring into Petrograd, still the seat of government and the storm centre of ideas.

At times I felt heavy depression, as though all the sins and weaknesses of the dark despotic past were now weighing Russia down. Again I felt the stimulus of tremendous hopes and visions. But these were turgid and confused; the human sea was turbulent. It has not cleared, nor will it clear till many months and years have passed.

And it was hard to analyse. One must learn about all Russia first. I left the city several times and went to Moscow, smaller towns and lonely little villages. And each time I would come back with a better understanding of these deep surging forces. It is of such vital urgency that we Americans understand; for even though the Russian army ceases to figure in this war, the new nation or the group of nations that will presently arise from these hundred and eighty million people will deeply affect the future in Europe and throughout the world. I can make no definite prophecies, for the situation keeps changing — it is changing while I write. I can give only glimpses, the vivid impressions that I had of the main elements in it all — the forces, problems, hopes and dreams, all interbound and interacting.

I shall take them one by one — the many clashing

factions that made up the so-called "government," and after that the army, the railroads and the industries, the food supplies, the reorganized church, and last of all the peasant.

But in nearly every part you will find the peasant cropping up. For I felt his presence everywhere. Nine tenths of the population still belongs to the peasant class. Russia is still a peasant land. And the peasants — the "dark people," as many Russians call them — have lived for generations in bleak and lonely villages, in poverty and ignorance. They have been inarticulate. But now at last, from underneath the present angry turmoil, from every part of Russia their deep voice begins to be heard.

New York City, February, 1918.

# CHAPTER I

IN Petrograd it was hard to say just where was the real government. It had so many different parts, and many of these were outside the rambling government buildings. In order to understand them all, one point first must be made clear — that the governing powers in Russia were striving to control and direct both a war and a revolution, and the needs of the two were directly opposed. From the one side, the revolution clamored for freedom from discipline and from heavy taxes, freedom from duties of every kind, freedom of speech and assembly, freedom for every faction to further its own favourite plan for the building of the new nation. And meanwhile, from the other side, the war kept pressing, pressing in, demanding disciplined armies, Liberty Loans, and a united people — united by force if need be and through the suppression for a time of many new found liberties.

The war meant German armies without and a host of German spies within. I felt their presence everywhere, in the government itself and within all groups and parties, giving secret encouragement to

the forces of the Old Régime, and among the extreme revolutionist groups ceaselessly working day and night to increase the chaos wherever they could and bring down the whole edifice with a crash.

In July they nearly succeeded.

There was a government crisis then, for the non-socialist ministers were threatening to resign. The great mass of the socialists, who supported Kerensky, were against these resignations, for they knew that a coalition ministry was the only way to keep the nation united; and they felt the time had come for the revolution to "cash in" on what it had already won. They wanted a "practical government." But the Bolsheviki and the Maximalists, the extreme socialist factions, together with bodies of strikers and of mutinous soldiers, came out to show their power and force Kerensky to set up an all-socialist ministry that should bring the war to an early close and drive on the revolution to wholesale confiscation of the land, the factories, mines and mills, in order that the people should own and control these things for themselves.

And the Germans were prompt to seize the chance to turn this demonstration into bloody riot.

On the eve of the rising I was told that there was to be an all-night session of the Ministry; and so with an American friend, I went to the Marinsky Palace. In that massive building we went to the room where the Ministers met, but we found it empty, almost dark; and we learned that the meet-

ing had been postponed. I lingered there a moment. It was a rich, imposing place, with lofty ceilings and white walls, tall windows draped with heavy curtains. In the centre was a semi-circle of huge crimson velvet chairs. Here in the despotic days had met the councillors of the Czar. How shadowy and silent now!

On the streets outside, we noticed a change. Everywhere were groups of people. In some, one man or one woman was talking; in others, all seemed to be talking at once. Some spoke in low, anxious voices — as though asking, "What will happen tonight?" But again we found them stoical. We passed a bread-line of women and children sitting on the pavement, and they were quiet as usual. But as we walked on, the little groups began to thicken into crowds. At one corner was a motor filled with armed soldiers and workingmen who were rapidly giving out leaflets and speaking in voices sharp and low. Then as we passed a barracks-yard we saw an armoured car inside with two soldiers sitting on the top, quietly smoking cigarettes.

As we neared the lower Nevsky, more and more motors crowded with soldiers began to appear. Who were they and what were they doing? Were they for the government or against it? Nobody seemed to know. Now the crowds were increasing fast, and the talk of groups innumerable merged in a harsh, buzzing roar. Coming into the Nevsky, we found it wholly black with people. A bare-

headed speaker, who stood on the seat of an automobile, was shouting to them in a voice that was high-pitched and quivering with the passion of revolt. But the crowd did not seem to be with him. We heard barely any applause.

The feeling of panic was in the air. All along the great, dim thoroughfare were crowds with speakers shouting. Armed motors were speeding up and down. Here and there it would grow quiet, but soon the uproar would break out again. And yet through it all, it seemed to me, the great mass of the people were still unmoved — only curious and uneasy. Now the dusk grew deeper; and from the motors, head-lights flashed. Nearly every car had a machine-gun, and was packed with workmen, students and soldiers armed with rifles and revolvers. As they passed each other, their shouts of "Tovarisch!" (comrade) could be heard far down the street.

We went to the cable office, where my companion sent a dispatch. On a dark side street nearby, which led from the Winter Palace, came a regiment of Cossacks on foot. They were singing in queer, sharp rhythm. A few small boys ran along at their side, and they gave me a chilly feeling. "Those kids," I thought, "ought to be home in bed!"

We went back down the Nevsky. The long street was almost dark, for it was after eleven o'clock, and the sky above us was filled with slow-moving, slate coloured clouds. You could see the

sidewalks on either hand, but the dark wooden pavement of the street was almost lost in shadows. Still the crowds, and still the speeches, still the low incessant roar and the trampling of countless feet. Here in the throng of people hurried a busy little man who looked like a suburbanite. His arms were full of provisions and he was skurrying for his home. A tall thin girl of the street-walker type came slowly and forlornly by. On her face was a fixed uneasy smile. No one seemed to notice her now.

On a corner a girl was speaking in passionately angry tones. The motors packed with soldiers still came tearing down the street. Piercing whistles were heard, and the honk of horns; and the speakers shouted on all sides. But all these forces seemed so scattered, for the crowds did not respond. They did not cheer the speakers. I felt no great mass power here. The people began moving off to their homes. We met a Russian whom we knew, and he told us how different it had been at the time of the first uprising in March.

"Then every one was cheering," he said. "And every one was happy, excited, shaking hands with strangers — and you could hear them singing all up and down the streets! This tonight is nothing," he added. "Look at these crowds. They came out only to see what would happen. Now they are through and are going home."

By degrees the tense, shrill voices died down. Only here and there one could be heard, and always

the crowd seemed unsympathtic. In one, a thin, seedy looking workman was arguing fiercely with tears in his eyes — but a woman who wore a large hat and black veil had one hand on his shoulder; she was smiling into his face and she kept quietly shaking her head. In another group, an angry young girl was appealing to a soldier; but he, too, smiled and shook his head. And again I found an elderly man reasoning very quietly with a score of younger men. The natural forces of law and order seemed to be rising everywhere.

But then, I think, some German agent, who felt that all chance of a riot was now rapidly slipping by, decided to act while there was time.

From a little farther down the street, a large motor-truck came slowly along, crowded with workmen and soldiers. It stopped and gathered a crowd around, and there was some quick, excited talking. It turned and went back down the street, with a dense throng of people following, men and women, girls and boys. We fell in line to see what would happen. Suddenly from just ahead came two single rifle shots; and then, an instant later, the long, sharp, ugly rattle of a machine-gun, and the hiss and buzz of bullets over our heads. At once there was panic everywhere; and in the next ten seconds I grew so absorbed in my own career that I had no time to look around. In the rush I was carried off my feet; I threw up my arms and was borne with the mob through an open gateway into a court. Behind, the

fusillade increased, but I heard no screams, no shouting. I looked back upon the street and saw it black with people lying on their faces. Bullets were flying thick and fast, and from all up and down the Nevsky I could hear the crash of shop windows as men dove through to get indoors.

In the crowded courtyard where I stood, an excited boy with a Browning began to shoot haphazard. Again there was a rush for cover, into the barracks that faced on the court. There the low rooms were stuffy and warm, and full of hurrying soldiers. Men, women and children kept crowding in. A stout officer with a quiet voice was trying to reassure them. Now the shots came from all sides. From a narrow rear court, an anxious father lifted a chubby scared small boy up into a little window there, and I pulled the youngster into the barracks, tearing his trousers on the broken grating of the window. The nervous father then changed his mind and gestured to me to pass the boy down. I did, and he tore his breeches again; and they skurried away up the long narrow court.

A little later, by this same court, I came out upon a side street which ran along the Fontanka Canal. Four or five soldiers, dripping wet, were climbing up out of the canal, into which they had dived for safety. Two workmen near the corner were binding up a comrade's arm; and I saw a slender youngster pass holding his wrist with a queer dazed look. Blood was dripping from it.

All along this side street, small groups of men and women were gathered in the doorways talking in low, hurried voices. I went through a maze of narrow streets, and everywhere were these small groups. Suddenly the city had become so hushed and still. In front of one apartment house, a porter was sweeping the sidewalk in a perfectly unconcerned way. Near him a group of men were laughing as they lit their cigarettes.

I worked my way back to the Nevsky, and found the big street empty. Here and there soldiers moved about, but I saw barely any civilians. It was fearfully hot, and the soldiers were now drinking greedily from the water hydrants. The sky had cleared and its blue vault was faintly studded by silver stars. Although it was not midnight yet, there would soon come the flush of dawn. As I drew near the place where the shooting had started, I met an ambulance coming away; but I found no bodies on the street and no other wounded. The soldiers sat in long lines on the curbs, most of them smoking cigarettes. Some were picking the broken glass out of the shop windows, and others were wondering whether or not to lay hold of a trolley wire which had been cut by a bullet and was dangling over the street. At the corner a street-vender's booth had been over-turned and riddled with shots. But there were no other signs of the panic of a half-hour before. A Red Cross ambulance broke down, and at

once an interested crowd gathered around to watch the chauffeur tinker with the engine.

Again the excitement seemed at an end, and I turned to go back to my hotel. But all at once the wide street ahead became dark again with a moving mass of people. They drew quickly near. In front came lines of armed workingmen shouting out the Marseillaise. They were part of the Bolshevik Red Guard. Now I could see the populace pouring out of the same side streets where I had been a few minutes before. By thousands they came streaming by — the same people who, at the very start of the revolution the spring before, had come marching out for Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Five months had passed, and they had found little change in their hard bleak lives. No miracle had happened. And so from their dark tenements they had come marching out again, looking for a strange new land where they should be the equals of all.

Some of the men carried rifles, and here and there I saw a girl with a pistol in her hand. But the great mass of them were unarmed. Some were bearing huge banners and red flags. A few were singing the Marseillaise and the Internationale, but most were singing Russian songs. Many women had brought their children, too, on this midnight people's march. I remember one who wore a white kerchief and walked with her arm around her small boy. Her head was thrown a little back, and the

strange dawn light fell on her face. She was singing softly with glad eyes. A line of young girls passed me, smiling straight ahead of them. An old man came by, his hat back on his head; and he, too, was singing. Here was a group of laughing boys, and close behind them came a file of silent frowning workingmen, armed.

And as that marching multitude swept on down the Nevsky, a part of the turgid hungry soul of the Russian people seemed to be here.

I watched till they had all gone by. I heard no shots nor any cries. The night's turmoil was over at last. And so I went back to my hotel, and for a time I sat trying to write. But I was worn out and soon gave it up. I went to my window and looked down into the courtyard of the hotel. Now it was broad day-light. The court was absolutely still. Only a lean hungry dog was very slowly and carefully looking about for his breakfast.

I slept a few hours. When I woke up, I found that it was raining. Soon some of my friends came into my room. One had a morning paper, and we tried to piece together the news. But the news was only rumour. We went out into the streets, each one going a separate way; and when we met again at lunch, each of us had seen or heard street fighting in various parts of the town. And this went on for several days. The street battles were only at intervals, but the time between was never dull; for there

were parades and mass meetings; the orators talked and the editors wrote impassioned editorials.

Where then was the Russian government?

Kerensky had gone down to the Front. Several of his ministers were virtually prisoners here; and others were scattered, their power gone. The only thing that turned the tide was the fact that the mass of the people gave small support to the rioters. Moreover, it rained; it rained and poured; and water is a deadly thing for the life of an insurrection. Soon the Cossacks in Petrograd resolved to uphold the government. Other loyal troops arrived from the Front. There was some more street fighting, and then came a season of wholesale arrests. I saw whole groups of Bolsheviki marched along between files of soldiers; and the people on the streets passed them with indifference. At least so it seemed to me. Law and order had returned, and with it came the government, because at that stage in the revolution the people in Petrograd wished it so.

This was largely due, I think, to the fact that the "bourgeois" newspapers and some of the socialist papers, too, had succeeded in making the people believe that the Lenine-Trotsky faction was on the Kaiser's payroll — an accusation which later events have proved, I believe, to be utterly false. But the feeling against them was also due to the fact that great masses of Russians were thoroughly sick of disorder and wanted to give the Kerensky régime a chance to go on with constructive work.

And so, at the sombre magnificent funeral of the Cossacks who had been killed in repressing the riots, by tens of thousands the people came out to show where lay their sympathies. From the cathedral portico, Kerensky made an oration honouring these Cossack dead. He spoke for the "real revolution." He declared that it could not be obtained so long as the German autocracy was left in full power in the South — and a storm of cheers swept over the square. Later, as that vast multitude moved slowly up the Nevsky singing revolutionist songs, Kerensky walked bareheaded behind the last Cossack catafalque. And on that day the government seemed embodied in this one man.

What kind of a man was Kerensky? And what has become of him now? He is either dead or in hiding. For the present at least the great revolution, surging on, has passed him by. But last summer his name was on every one's lips, and he was the power in the land.

Born in a Russian family of the petty nobility, his boyhood was spent in a large town down on the lower Volga. He became a lawyer. Deeply sympathetic with the cause of Russian freedom, during the years of wholesale arrests that followed the revolutionary attempt of 1905, at the risk of his own career he ably defended in court many revolutionists. He was an eloquent pleader, his name became known in radical circles, and by the outbreak of the war he was in the Russian Duma rep-

resenting the most moderate of the socialist parties there. When the revolution came last spring, he was made Minister of Justice in the first administration. As the power of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies swiftly grew, and things came to an open clash between them and the more conservative forces, again and again he patched up a truce; and with his success his power grew, till he became head of the government.

"How long will Kerensky live?" was a question heard on every hand. A delicate man, in his thirties, for some time he had suffered from a fatal kidney trouble that made his life but a question of years or even months. High strung, and with a deep passion for the revolution, he drove himself all summer, literally day and night, snatching a few hours' sleep here and there, in the Winter Palace at Petrograd, on a train or somewhere down at the Front. He had to resort to the constant use of morphine and of brandy. Time and again in his speeches he fainted, was brought back to consciousness and finished what he had to say. His endurance was phenomenal.

Many said he was not the man for the place, but there was no one else in sight. At a time of endless jealousies and suspicions on all sides, all factions and all parties knew Kerensky to be sincere, and that for the cause of a free Russia he was burning up his life. Moreover, he was the go-between. More than any other radical, he was liked by the

non-socialists; and of all those in the government, he was the man whom the soldiers and workmen were most ready to listen to. Through crisis after crisis, when chaos seemed inevitable, Kerensky managed a compromise, formed a new ministry, struggled on.

But all summer his hold was precarious, his government in a stormy sea. At no time could it have been called a representative government; for from the great "dark people" who live in the villages and make up the mass of the nation, the Kerensky ministries gained but very slight support. For the peasants were shrewd and wished to be "shown." Before they backed any government, it must show that it could give them land, and supply them besides with the ploughs, the tools, and with the shoes and clothing, which they could not buy in towns because the workmen would not work. No government could long endure unless it got down to business and met these fast increasing demands by measures to bring back to life the railroads and the industries.

And so, perhaps unawares to himself, forced by Russia's urgent needs, as the load of responsibility increased upon his shoulders, steadily, instinctively, Kerensky drew away from the extreme revolutionists and strove more and more to strengthen the liberal and practical and constructive elements within and without the government. To little by little form a "bloc," made up of the more moderate socialist and labour groups together with the most liberal of the so-called "bourgeois," became Kerensky's purpose.

To the bourgeois parties — Cadets, Progressives, Octobrists — brief space need be given here. They have ceased to function as parties — with one exception, the Cadets.

"Cadet" is an abbreviation of "Constitutional Democrat." For years they were the great party of liberals throughout the land. Under the able leadership of Milioukov, they opposed in the Duma all attempts of the Old Régime to fasten its despotic hold. And in the Zemstvos, or provincial governments, their members played a leading part in the work of social reform that went on for nearly fifty years despite ceaseless opposition from the government of the Czar. They taxed the peasants and used the funds to build and conduct many thousands of schools and establish a free medical service in the villages. They endeavoured to introduce a more scientific farming. Many gave their entire fortunes to such liberal reforms. They were country gentlemen who worked hard to help the peasants.

But most of them were land-owners, too. And so now the peasants, who wanted the land, were turning them out of the Zemstvos and electing in their places country doctors, teachers, workingmen and peasants, who were pledged to a program of confiscation of private estates. Naturally the land-owners protested. Some said that the new government should compensate them for the land, while others were bitterly opposed to losing control of their property. They claimed that the "dark peo-

ple" needed modern methods of farming far more than additional soil, and that thousands of private estates had been model farms for their neighbourhoods.

So the country gentleman Cadet was opposed to Kerensky's government. And meanwhile in the cities, the others of this party, professors, doctors, lawyers, factory owners, business men, who had ardently supported the revolution at the start, now saw it go beyond all bounds, according to their way of thinking. And so they rapidly dropped away.

At the time that I left Russia last fall, all the bourgeois factions might have been divided in two parts — the minority who still believed in supporting the administration; and the majority who with Milioukov believed the Kerensky government was hopeless until it freed itself from the domination of the Council of Soldiers and Workmen, and who were therefore waiting for the inevitable crash; after which, they said, they would be ready to come in and build a democracy along safe and liberal lines.

"This government must run its course," said Milioukov, in a talk with me. "So long as it allows itself to be ruled by the Council, there is little or no really constructive work that it can do. Russia cannot be called a democracy now, for this government does not represent the great mass of the Russian people. It represents only the radical minority of the workingmen, and they form less than

ten percent of the whole Russian nation. It is foolish to prophesy these days — but the Socialists will probably grow more radical, week by week, until they have clearly shown to all that they cannot solve the problems which are pressing on us today.

"Meanwhile our party," he continued, "is far from being on the decline. We are steadily growing. Each day we gain new adherents from all kinds of Russians who are sick of disorders and want to see some kind of steady practical work. We are training speakers and sending them out. The Constituent Assembly, they say, will meet in the early autumn. I doubt if it will meet that soon. If it does, we shall have in it only a minority voice. But every month will increase our power. You Americans must remember that a transformation like this is not a matter of weeks but of years."

In the meantime, Milioukov and his friends refused to Kerensky their support. But both from the Cadets and from other bourgeois factions, there were many who felt it dangerous to stand off and let the government fall for lack of practical aid. Through them, in each crisis last summer, Kerensky was able to form a new coalition ministry, instead of the all-socialist one for which the Bolsheviki kept up a strong and increasing demand.

Not all of his non-socialist supporters were sincere. Many were there for personal ends, unscrupulous politicians who abandoned the more conservative camps and seized this chance of power,

some hoping to fill Kerensky's place. The band waggon was shaky but it was the only waggon in sight. And so in that city of chaos, to the many plans for a heaven on earth were added endless rumours of graft. It was not only difficult for Kerensky to get practical men but also to avoid the aid of many able citizens, big business men who were only too ready to solve the practical problems in ways that would enrich themselves and leave them in charge of the government.

But of those who *were* helping, most were beyond any doubt sincere devoted patriots doing their best to postpone the crash. I like to remember the Countess Panin, one of the wealthiest women in Russia, who for years has given her energies to welfare and educational work in the tenement quarters of Petrograd. I met her first when as a Cadet she was an assistant minister directing government relief. In all the confusion of constant change, every day and every night this woman was at her post, steadily meeting the pressing needs of the women and children of Petrograd. Six weeks later I saw her again. She was assistant minister now in the Ministry of Instruction; and in that same resolute smiling way, she was beginning the first labours of co-ordinating and strengthening the demoralized system of education. The government had taken over some 35,000 schools of the Church. Over 80,000 schools in all were to open in a fortnight, together with hundreds of colleges and similar institutions.

But through the daily jungle of problems and perplexities, she seemed to me to have her eyes fixed on some bright distant goal.

"In Russia, these days," she told me, "one has to keep looking far ahead — and keep hoping and keep working. If there is confusion now, and more perhaps tomorrow — well, so much the worse for us. But the task of building a new Russia cannot be begun too soon. Nobody is more eager than I to see this war fought through to the end; but remember it is important, too, that Russia comes safely out of this as a great free nation. There must be no going back to the Czar. That is a part of the victory that should be most desired by liberals throughout the world."

I found others in the government whose hope and faith were almost gone. So many immediate problems were clamouring for solution, they made little or no headway and could not even see ahead. One of these men said to me, with a tragic look in his friendly eyes:

"This revolution should be called the 'Russian Revelation' for it has revealed to us that we are not practical. We have been dreamers, critics of life. The Old Régime got us in the habit of blaming all ills on the government. Now we ourselves are the government, but most of us don't know how to begin."

Many such men in Petrograd, harassed by countless perplexities, often during the summer months

would go for aid and counsel to a simple frame house in a garden out on the edge of the city, where lived one of the great quiet figures of the Revolution, Pierre Kropotkin, one of the most widely known of all Russian revolutionists, the prince who fifty years ago had lost his title and fortune in championing the people's cause. He had spent his life in exile. Last spring, he returned to Russia; and like most of the old revolutionists, Tchaikovsky, "Babushka" and the rest, he had made his powerful influence felt for moderation, sanity and union of all factions. Though now nearly eighty years of age, his courage and his vision were clear and vigorous as before. He refused Kerensky's request that he take a place in the Ministry; but again and again, Kerensky, Lvov and many others, both socialists and bourgeois, came out to this quiet garden and there renewed their hope and faith. Kropotkin's voice was steadily for continuing the war until the German autocracy should be overthrown — from within or without.

"Both for the war and the revolution," he told me, "Russia needs all her ablest men in the service of the government. There must be coalition and a united country — first to drive the war through to the end, and meanwhile to be building a new democracy here that will stand. We must not split on this problem of land. The big estates must surely go, but we must work out for the owners of land some system of indemnification through taxes to be payed by all. We must lay such heavy taxes on income and

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THE MOST MOMENTOUS AND GREATEST LABOR PARADE IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY, PASSED UP NEVSKI PROSPEKT AFTER THE WORD HAD SPREAD THAT RUSSIA WAS FREE

inheritance that all the big private fortunes will gradually disappear. We cannot reach equality at a bound — but the work must be begun at once."

He had little patience with those Cadets who stood aloof awaiting a crash, but he was a patient father-confessor to those who were trying to pull Russia through.

Since then, in the revolution, the Bolsheviki have seized control. But in these months it is to be hoped that all true freedom lovers there will rally around the new government, so far as that is possible, and help in every way they can to solve the immediate problems, to build something out of the chaos to-day. It is dangerous for Russia that so many of her ablest sons stand by and await calamities of famine and of pestilence which may become so terrible that in the reaction afterwards a new autocracy may arise — one which almost certainly would be subservient to Berlin.

For it must not be forgotten that there are still in Russia many who would welcome the restoration of the Czar. In Petrograd last summer, in those great rambling government buildings were many thousands of workers of the old bureaucratic type.

"They cannot put us out," one of these men told me, "because they're too busy to change us all. Each government department is like a big piece of machinery. It lumbers along and it creaks and groans, but it does work after a fashion. And if you try to take out one cog, the whole machine would

stop at once. So here we are still in office. For how long, we do not know."

From the Russian letters I get today, I judge that large numbers of these men are still in the government buildings. They are the *little* bureaucrats, whom the Bolsheviki have not as yet had time to replace. Though some of them are liberals, more are for the Old Régime, and would welcome back the autocracy.

But I doubt if these reactionaries will have their opportunity. For from all I saw in Russia and from what I hear today, I believe that the radical forces are growing stronger month by month — and that, if not the Bolsheviki, then some other radical régime, will go on with the vast adventure there. For the great mass of the Russians is more insistent than ever before on changes radical and deep. When the Bolsheviki seized control, many predicted they could not last more than a few days or weeks. But instead of declining, their power grew. And this was so for the reason that not only the workingmen in towns but more and more of the great " dark people " out in the little villages gave to the Lenine-Trotsky group either active or passive support — because of all Russian radicals, the Bolsheviki were the first to stop talking and take action on the two things the peasants want most — land and peace. At the time of this writing, it is by no means sure that the Bolshevik government can make good on either of these demands. They have not yet been able to

secure a "democratic peace," nor have they solved the problem of how to divide up the land.

But even if they be overthrown, there still remains the "Soviet," or, to give it its full name, the All Russian Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. This huge chaotic Jacobin Club is made up not only of Bolsheviki — they are only its radical wing. It includes all the labour and socialist groups, and has deep roots in the popular faith. It will be hard to shatter now. For from the very start of the revolution a year ago — while the Kerensky ministries were mere administrations, each with a brief precarious life — the "Soviet" was the force behind. Together with the Peasants' Council (of which I shall speak later on), it was the real governing power, and has been up to the present day.

My first glimpse of the Tauride Palace, headquarters of the Soviet, was upon the second day of the July insurrection. An immense low rambling building of white and yellow stucco, it ran around three sides of a court. There were three big porticos, and from them speakers were shouting in strained, excited voices to the crowds of working people — men and women, boys and girls — who kept arriving in parades and pressing, pressing into the court. There were some soldiers in the crowds, and more in a heavy guard outside. Hundreds of workingmen were armed, and their faces were white and haggard from the sleepless night just passed. Some

of them carried red banners bearing these inscriptions:

"We Want Bread and Peace and Freedom"—"Land for the Peasants, Bread for the Workers, Peace for the World"—"Down with the Bourgeois Ministers"—"Long live the Council of Workmen, Soldiers and Peasants"—"War on Capitalism."

The speakers kept on shouting, but the crowds did not respond. In that warm muggy rain they looked dead with fatigue. Many men and girls lay asleep in the wet trampled grass of the court-yard. Some men could barely carry their rifles. They could not have lasted long against a few trained soldiers. They did not look like men who would run; they had the eyes of men who would stand and be slaughtered for what they believed in. So many Russians are like that.

With a friend and his interpreter, I wedged in through an entrance door between armed guards, to whom we showed our credentials. We were admitted into a great hall filled with dense crowds and a babel of cries. In the middle, a speaker was shouting hoarsely. The air was thick and humid and filled with body odours. Huge pillars ran around the hall supporting a narrow gallery, under which, along the walls, lay scores of dirty soldiers asleep, while some sat around tall buckets of soup and ate big chunks of black bread, or drank tea from their tin cups. On every hand were dirty papers, heaps of refuse of all kinds, relics of months of con-

fusion. There was a constant tramping of heavy boots of soldiers. At tables ranged along the walls sat men and women writing.

Soon we met a thick-set man with a coarse black beard and large features. He wore glasses, he had snappy black eyes and an abrupt way of talking. One of the principal leaders of the pro-war majority here, he had just come up from the Front, where he had been speaking to mutinous soldiers. He had urged them to fight, and they had replied by beating him unconscious. His head was still bound with bandages, but he did not appear at all dismayed by the ominous chaos about him. When he heard we were correspondents from America, he said:

"Good. You must learn the truth about us. You must learn that most of us are against this effort to mob the government. This trouble will soon be over. Come."

He led us through crooked corridors into a large busy room where at many tables sat men who were working intently. Most of them were deputies, and almost without exception they were strong in their disapproval of the Bolshevik attempt. Here and there was an elderly man who looked half way between a professor and a congressman. Two of these, we learned, were socialist government ministers. Today they were virtually prisoners. We went into another room, and there we found more men at tables writing or talking intensely.

More and more I had the impression of some

order and system here, and of real work going on, with a definite plan of organization. Every few minutes, into the room would come tramping a big delegation of workingmen or soldiers or sailors from the crowds outside, wet and dirty, clamorous; and there would be shouts and confusion. But presently the intruders would leave, and again the work at the tables went on — on typewriters, in ledgers and through low intent conversations. It went on as it had for the last few months, ever since the first days of the revolution. Despite thousands of such interruptions, something had been building here.

And this impression remained with me. In the visits I made after that, I saw the Tauride Palace in many different aspects. I saw the court-yard massed with troops, now under control of their officers. I saw rifles and machine-guns that had been captured from the mobs brought here and piled against the walls. I saw the hall filled with long lines of stacked guns, and the soldiers sleeping in rows on the floor. I saw the refuse swept away and some semblance of order and cleanliness. And this change had been brought about by the moderate majority, who wanted no more disorders but a chance to steadily build. Time and again the Deputies held stormy all night sessions and sent delegates into the tenement quarters of Petrograd to head off the general strike which the Bolsheviki endeavoured to start. Every day the Russian press was full of the Council's doings. In Petrograd and Moscow and other

towns I visited, and even in small villages, I heard people speak of the Council. A few spoke with approval; most, with bitterness and distrust; but it was recognized by all as the Jacobin Club of Russia, which held the government in its hands. Coming back to Petrograd, I still found the people under its spell, wondering what it would do next.

Since then, through the autumn and winter months, its power has steadily deepened. Two All Russian Congresses of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies have met in Petrograd since I was there; and each time they have elected a Council more radical than the one before. Last summer the Bolsheviki had barely a fifth of the Deputies. Now they are in full control; and under their leadership, day and night, this proletarian parliament is straining to build out of chaos a socialist republic. Will they succeed? No one can tell. But whatever the Council does in the stormy months that lie ahead, its place is fixed in history as one of the moulding forces in the whirl out of which the new Russia was born.

And what a home it had chosen! The Tauride Palace was built long ago by Catherine the Great for one of her many paramours. It took so many years in the building, they say, that the love affair had long been cold before the lover received his reward. Behind it are spacious gardens, a tiny lake under great spreading trees. From the main entrance, you come at once into a square hall under a dome, with walls and lofty columns of white. You

go through into the immense main hall, rectangular and two floors high, with a gallery running around above. This had once been used as a ballroom, and there had been vast magnificence, courtly nobles and grande dames. But into this old palace, where once on such a prodigal scale there had been wealth and luxury, gambling and drunkenness, debauchery of every kind, had now come mobs and violence, blind forces and confusion, on a scale as prodigal as before. Russia seems to be like that. May the triumph of her democracy be on as vast proportions!

I believe it will be so in the end. For I felt something far greater here than these men and their plans and theories, their factions and their jealousies. All this will surely pass away, but the elements that gave it strength will merge with other elements, and so a new nation will arise.

But it will not be as they have planned.

I shall give but little space to the socialist parties here, for their comparative strength and their views keep changing still from month to month.

In Russia under the Old Régime, there were two principal socialist groups — the Social Democrats and the Social Revolutionists. The former centred their efforts almost wholly on the workmen in towns; the latter, on the peasants. From the first party the Bolsheviki, and from the second the Maximalists, have emerged as the radical wings

and have tended to fuse together; while the less radical factions, Mensheviki and Minimalists, have inclined toward the still more moderate, semi-socialist groups, the so-called Trudoviki and Narodni parties. These last two groups were small at first, but during the summer they combined and, together with the Menshevik and Minimalist factions, made up the great majority of socialists in the Council.

This moderate majority was in favour of pushing the war to the end, and of putting off the great problems of land, labour and distribution of wealth, for the National Assembly which was expected to meet in the fall. The programs of these moderate groups differed widely in many respects, but they were alike at least in this — that all were based on the idea of gradual change, of successive steps that should lead through many laborious years to a social democratic state. On the other hand, the minority, both Bolsheviki and Maximalists, were in favour of an early peace and a union with the masses of Germany and France alike and of all other countries, to start a movement everywhere which, with or without violence, should seize upon all governments and give the world to the workers.

But the Council was not formed by the socialist parties alone. It grew out of a motley mass of labour bodies all over the land. Before the revolution, there had sprung up in Petrograd and many other cities scores of local Councils of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. About two months after

freedom was won, these bodies all sent delegates to a big congress in Petrograd, where they were met by over a thousand delegates from the armies, which were already honeycombed with numberless soldiers' committees. The Congress met for several weeks, in session almost day and night. Finally they elected this Council of four hundred deputies, and then the several thousand delegates returned to their homes, leaving this, their parliament.

And here, all through the summer, came numberless petitioners from every corner of the land. For there was chaos in Russia. And out of the mighty confusion, from cities, towns and villages all over the new republic as yet but in the throes of birth, delegates came to Petrograd — from Finland and the Caucasus, from Russian Poland and the Ukraine, to demand local autonomy; from the Baltic Fleet to urge that their admiral be arrested and their insurgent leaders freed; from the armies to protest against the reforms of Kornilof. And from the countless villages where the great "dark people," 160,000,000 strong, wring a living from the soil, they came to demand of the Council that all this soil be given to them, and that then the revolution halt, that the cities cease their turbulence and settle down in their factories to produce the clothing and the shoes, the tools and ploughs and other things that the peasant needs in his daily life. "If your workmen won't produce these things we will no longer sell our food!" In brief, the peasants were on strike

against the striking workingmen. All Russia indeed was filled with strikes, strikes of every kind and creed. And sooner or later the strikers sent delegates to the Council.

The life of a nation in fever surged into this old palace, the real seat of government and the storm centre of ideas. And this life absorbed me. I forgot the theoreticians and grew engrossed in these messengers that came from the boundless Russia outside. They came and went; I had but glimpses. And so, of all the ones I saw, I can give but a few suggestions here. To me they were like rays of light out into that obscurity.

One day, in the ante-chamber to the rooms in which the Executive Committee was holding its daily session, I sat down on a low window sill and sent my interpreter into the crowd to see what he could bring me. He came back in a moment and said:

"Look at this little chap at your side."

A soldier sat on a bench nearby, a little man with a small black beard and curly hair that came out from under his soldier cap. He had a round face and fiery eyes. He was making rapid gestures and talking in quick angry tones to three stolid soldiers in front of him. He held the "Pravda" on his knee, the Bolshevik paper which had been going by millions of copies down to the soldiers at the Front. The little man pounded it as he talked.

"You know what this paper says?" he cried. "Now listen here, tovarische! We are soldiers,

but we are peasants, too. Most of us come from villages. And we must know what is going on, or robbers will get the land that is ours! Now, listen — this is what it says! When the revolution started, our Minister of Justice issued an order not to allow any man to sell his land until the big Assembly when land will be divided up! But now a new Minister of Justice, a damned bourgeois and nothing else, has told the judges to go ahead and let them buy or sell as they please!

"And two rich land-owners have already done it! One sold 5000 desatinas (about 12,000 acres) to his Danish manager. When the peasants came to take the land, the new Danish owner said, 'You can't! It's mine and I'm a foreigner!' They said, 'We can't, eh?' and kicked him off! They will never give up that land again! But the government must pay the Dane because he is a foreigner — and then with this money that should be ours he will pay what he owes to his boss, the old Russian landlord! Now what shall be done by us at once with this damned bourgeois Minister?"

As the little man talked on, several other listeners came. One was a man of middle age, in a dark grey suit, black top boots and a visored cap of silk. He had a grizzled reddish beard and a ruddy face with wrinkles around his small, shrewd, kindly eyes. We drew him to our window and soon we had him talking. He was a well-to-do peasant, we learned, and had been made vice-president of his district land

committee at home. I was eager to learn how he felt about the revolution.

Was he a socialist? Yes, he was. But plainly he felt vague about that. He was profoundly interested in just one thing, and that was the land — not the land of all Russia but of his immediate neighbourhood. You could see that his mind was back there as he talked, and that *his revolution* was there, and that it was so absorbing to him he had no time for such trivial things as cities, wars or Kaisers.

He wished to see all the land, he said, become national property. Even the peasants must give up their holdings, and then in a great re-division new plots should be allotted to each.

"Our new Zemstvo land committee will attend to this," he said. "And later on we'll see to it that each plot is used for the common good. We won't have any lazy peasants around; but if a man does well with his land, we'll let him stay without paying rent. He can hand it on to his children. Our committee will watch the forests, too, and see that each gets his share of the wood and that the forests are not spoiled. We have on our committee an old peasant with one eye — but that eye goes through you like a knife — and he has loved trees all his life, as some women love their brats. And he will watch the forests.

"I tell you these land-owners are spoiling the forests of Russia. They waste their money in cities and sell their forests, cut them down. And with

their land it is the same. They mortgage it to pay their bills. So now their land must be taken away, and we will pay them not a cent. Every peasant family should have fifteen desatinas (about thirty-seven acres). And then we must get new machinery, ploughs and the other tools we need, tractors, reapers, mowing machines. To buy them, we have started co-operative societies in every village in our district. Everybody will chip in, and besides we will get credit from the People's Bank in Moscow. We will do all in order, and we will use the land for the best. We must learn new ways, we must read books in order to get the most out of the soil."

I asked him what he thought of the law allowing all the women to vote. He smiled with calm contempt, and said,

"It will make no difference. Our women are not thinkers. They have had no education at all, and will do exactly as we say."

I looked at him and wondered if his future would be as smooth as that.

"Our men are ignorant, too," he went on. "They all need education. We must begin with our small boys. What we need is schools in farming."

Then he looked about him, frowning and uncertain. He had come here to protest, he said, against the Bolsheviki. It was high time they quit their talk. All workmen must go back to work and make the things the peasants need. "If they don't," he said, "we'll let them starve."

Abruptly he turned away from us and went about that noisy room, hunting for some one to whom to present the written protest in his hand. Later I saw him calmly drinking tea at the table. Beside him sat the angry little peasant soldier who, scowling very furiously, was writing a protest of his own against allowing land to be sold.

I began to get an inkling of the troubles of the government.

On another day we had a talk with one of the Bolsheviki. He was thin and spare, with a pale smooth face and clear grey eyes.

"Sooner or later," he told me, "we are going to force the Council here to put in an All-Socialist government. We are ready to take all the blame for anything that may happen. What we want is the chance. We are losing it now; we are putting off all big reforms. If we wait till the end of the war or until the opening of the National Assembly, the bourgeoisie in the meantime will get into power more and more. Already the land-owners are beginning to organize, to try to split the peasant vote by lining up the more prosperous ones who are themselves little land-owners. But we are getting busy, too. We are raising a campaign fund of two million roubles; and already, from each factory where our organization is strong, we have sent out two agitators to work through all the villages. And the joke of it is, we are strong enough to make the factory bosses keep on paying wages to those men. They

are supporting our village campaign. We are making the bourgeoisie of the towns put up the money to destroy the bourgeoisie in the country!"

"We don't want a mere political revolution," he went on. "We want something deeper here. We want the peasants to get the land and the workers to get the factories, and mines and mills — at least all the large ones. And for this we work from the bottom up, organizing the men in the factories and arming thousands of them with guns. We are already in full control of some large munition factories. We know what rifles and munitions are turned out and where they go. In the plant where I work, we have put out the owners and are running it ourselves under a manager of our own.

"For the present we are not against leaving the army at the Front. But we are against an offensive; for we are in close touch every week with our comrades over in Germany, and we are sure that the radical wing of the German Socialists already has the majority of the rank and file of the party behind it. They'll have a revolution there not later than March or April, and that is what we are waiting for. In the meantime we want the Kaiser and the Junkers left in full control, for they will rouse in the Germans the bitterness that is needed. This isn't just a Russian affair. We want to see the Junkers in Germany and Austria and France and England and everywhere else put out of business! A year from now the fellows who have been shout-

ing, 'Go on with the war!' will be saying, 'We've gone far enough! We want peace!' But the rest of us won't be pacifists then — we'll go right on all over the world until the one big job is done!"

He was going to speak further, but some one suddenly called him away. And we talked with a quiet woman in black, who sat at a table near the door. She was the secretary of the Executive Committee. She was also a Bolshevik. Her husband was one of their leaders and had been arrested an hour before. On the street the people had mobbed him and kicked him into the gutter. He had been rescued by the police. His wife had just heard the news, but she took it all as a matter of course.

She explained to us the organization of the work of the Council. She told how each proposal, that came to the main body, was as a rule referred at once either to the Executive Committee or to one of the many sub-committees, for them to examine and make a report.

I asked why there were so few women here. There had been so many, I said, in radical circles in Russia before, while here I saw but four or five in a crowd of nearly a hundred men. She explained that the war had put back the whole woman's movement.

"But the revolution," she went on, "has granted woman suffrage. You will see great changes later on. Few men even dream of the changes."

On another day, in this same inner room, a sailor who sat beside me, turned and asked in English:

"You an Englishman?"

"No, an American. Where did you learn English?" I asked. He had a blunt swarthy pock-marked face and thick black hair. His expression was one of deepest gloom.

"I was in England a year and a half, working in a shipyard. Here it's a rotten town," he said. "I've had fever and pneumonia here. I have fever still, and I hate this town. I'm against this demonstration. These people stay up all day and all night and don't understand absolutely nothing.

"Some day I go to America. I used to work in a town on the Volga, and our factory manager was a fine man, an American engineer. Then came the war, and I went in the navy. I have been with the Black Sea Fleet, down there by the Caucasus. It is beautiful there. But since the revolution I got sent up here as a delegate — on a special job. So I got sick. I'm against all this, and so are my friends. The Black Sea Fleet and the Caucasian army are Social Revolutionists, and we say the war must go straight on. No German kisses — no shaking hands. Finish the war — smash it through!" He heaved a deep sigh. "Yes, this is a rotten town. You can't even buy a good cigarette. Here you see real Russian people — talking — talking — nothing to do!"

"What do you want most out of the revolution?" I asked. He scowled reflectively.

"How do I know? Some say, 'Give the Council

all the power.' But what would we do if we got it? We of the Black Sea Fleet don't agree. We say, when the revolution broke out we put in our own government — Kerensky and his crowd. And we say, why not trust them, give them a chance? If I put you in today and pull you out tomorrow, what can you do? Nothing at all." And again he sighed his deep disgust. "I have fever again today," he said. "Isn't this a rotten town? You can't even get a good cigarette. From the Caucasus I brought with me three pounds of good tobacco. I payed for it three roubles a pound. Here I was offered forty — but I said, 'Not for sale, my friend' — and smoked it all myself, thank God. But now it is gone — and besides, I feel sick, and you can't get food that a man can eat. I tell you what we got to do. We got to get a government here that can make the wheels go 'round!"

Soon after that he left me.

The war, the land, the factories — these were the three main questions. And there was a fourth that caused endless dispute — the question of autonomy for Finland, Russian Poland, the Caucasus and the Ukraine.

I met a Caucasian princess here. She sat next to me one day in the small press gallery of the hall in which the Duma used to meet. Now in its place was the Council. The woman by my side, I learned, was a correspondent for a Social Revolutionist paper down in the Caucasus. She spoke an easy fluent

French and was kind enough to translate for me bits of the Russian speeches here. I had been in the Caucasus years before, and we talked of the picturesque old town where she had been born, high up in the heart of the mountains. The Russians call the women there "the diamonds of Russia," and this woman was one of these. I was curious to learn what had drawn her to a scene like this, so many thousand miles from home. She explained that her husband had been killed in the first year of the war, and that after that she had thrown herself into war activities.

"We don't want to desert the Russian cause. We are all in favour of pushing the war through to the end," she told me. "In the meantime we are doing our part in the work of the revolution. The President of the Council here, and half the other leaders, are all of Caucasian birth. We are doing our share. But at the same time we want to be free from too much rule by Petrograd."

"What do you mean by autonomy? How free do you want to be?" I asked.

"Tell me about your country," she said. "You have States and a Nation, too. How are they joined together?"

I tried to explain the relations between our States and the Federal Government.

"We wish more than that," she said. "We want more independence."

I replied that in America we were moving just the

other way, toward a more centralized government; and I tried to explain how the growth of railroads, factories, mills, huge interstate corporations, was forcing us to grant more and more control to the men in Washington.

"But," she answered warmly, "we don't want an ugly land of mills! We want our Russia to stay as it is — I mean with its beautiful fields and its forests, its rivers and its mountains! You have seen the Caucasus, and I know that you will feel what I mean!" And she went on to tell me her dream for a brotherhood of republics loosely federated under a national parliament, each one helping the others but each free unto itself. No sudden growth of factory towns and great sprawling cities of grime, but a land of smiling villages. I thought of similar dreams I had heard — from Siberians and Finns and Little Russians of the Ukraine. And I wondered what would come of it all. Could any democratic régime hold together a nation so vast, with such widely different elements? Had it really been a nation before, or had it been only an empire? If the latter were true, then it might well be that Russia would soon split apart.

She gave me again the impression I had so often had before — of the immense sweep and variety of the human forces in Russia today. Delegates from all over the land were assembled in this hall, some from towns in Siberia over four thousand miles away. Men from the borders of China were here.

From the small gallery where we sat, I looked out on a huge square room, with a narrow gallery running around just under the low ceiling, and a large square skylight overhead that threw a soft light on the men below, at desks in semi-circular rows — the All Russian Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. Of the four hundred Deputies, one fourth were constantly in the field, going about to the cities and towns to strengthen and solidify the power of this parliament. The other three hundred men were here. Of these, about a hundred were labour representatives — some of them plain workingmen, but more of the labour leader type. There were a hundred soldiers and half as many sailors. And there were at least fifty officers. This was a surprise to me, as was the fact that so large a part of the deputies wore on their breasts the big white cross of the university graduate.

My eye ran up and down the rows of sober black suits, and of blouses, white and black and brown. The broad sailor collars here and there, and the epaulets of the officers, gave touches of bright colour; but the main effect was sober and far from exciting or riotous. Some leaned back with cigarettes, others bent forward on their elbows listening intently. The speeches were short, about five minutes each, and were made from a high speakers' box which stood out in front of the president's seat.

A big delegation of sailors from Kronstadt had just come tramping into the hall. Hundreds of

sailors had been disarmed by the government for taking part in the July insurrection. Their case was up for discussion now. A young sailor climbed into the box and began in a quiet reasoning tone to present their case. But his audience was against him.

"We meant no violence here," he said, "just a peaceable demonstration." This brought a loud laugh from all over the hall, and he grew red and angry. "I tell you the truth!" he shouted. "If you don't give us back our arms, you are false to the revolution! And we will turn you out of here and put in men who will do as we say!"

The next speaker was a soldier, a tall thin lad with close-cropped hair. He spoke rapidly and decidedly, against the insurrectionists. Then a workman climbed into the box, a grizzled man of middle age. After him came an army surgeon, and then another soldier. They all spoke briefly, bluntly, and there were no shouts and little applause. Except for the voice of the speaker, the room was perfectly quiet.

But from outside, from the lofty halls of that rambling old building, there came a constant hum of voices and the rhythmic tramp of feet. As the afternoon wore on, other delegations came to plead before this parliament. And the soldier guards at the door, with their rifles and fixed bayonets, gave a grim aspect to it all.

Here was the one real governing force in the Russia of those early months of change and revolu-

tion. A nation in transition, a governing body that represented but a small part of the citizens. How long the Council will hold its place it is impossible to tell. For the Russian Revolution is not a matter of months but of years. It has many voices still unheard.

The "dark people" in the villages have played as yet no active part. Do they really care who governs them? Despite all the present turmoil in the towns and cities there, the whole question of Russian freedom in the end comes back to that; for the peasant makes nearly 90 per cent. of the entire population, and without his active interest there can be no real democracy.

What is his attitude toward the war? What does he want of the revolution? How does he feel toward the Bolsheviki? Will he give his support to their plans? All last summer, while I was in Russia, these questions bothered the people in towns. From the various groups and organizations trying to build a new nation out of the present confusion, everywhere I heard the same question. How much support could they get from the peasants? Most of them were making propaganda in the villages, but as yet the whole matter was still in doubt. For the peasants have lived in poverty for countless generations in rude and lonely hamlets. They are inarticulate and slow to make their voices heard.

But that a large part of them at least do wish a

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KERENSKY, WITH OTHER MINISTERS WATCHING THE FUNERAL OF SEVERAL COSSACKS WHO WERE KILLED DEFENDING THE GOVERNMENT

share in the government, was made plain in 1905, when to the first Duma came many peasant delegates who stoutly refused to be annexed by any other political group. They even refused the commodious headquarters assigned to them, and chose a humble place of their own, where they lived in independence. They still wore their peasant clothes. The group doggedly held together, steadily voicing their demands for land and for other sweeping reforms. And that the people back at home were keenly interested, was proved by the fact that from all over Russia "peasant watchers" began to arrive; they had been sent to Petrograd in order to keep a vigilant eye on these new peasant congressmen. The first Duma accomplished little, from the peasants' point of view; and from the succeeding ones they were gradually shut out. But in spite of this discouragement, so many of them were hungry still for a share in the government, that last spring soon after the outbreak of the present revolution there came together in Petrograd a great Peasants' Congress, which elected an Executive Council to safeguard their interests.

I went several times to their headquarters. It was in a huge long building which had been used for generations as a conservative school of law for sons of the aristocracy. In the hall down-stairs I found a beautiful old *empire* clock standing there against the wall; and close beside it leaned a red banner with a picture crudely painted of a peasant at his plough,

waving his hat to the rising sun which shone on him over the roofs of the village. For the " dark people " the long bleak night of poverty was at an end. Close by, the floor was covered with big brown burlap sacks of proclamations, to be sent to the peasants both in the Army and in the villages. A few peasant soldiers stood on guard.

Up-stairs, the oil paintings on the walls, as well as the great chandeliers, had been carefully swathed in cloth as though to keep off defilement. Between two of the paintings had been nailed a large map of Russia, painted green, yellow, brown and blue, according to the strength of the Congress in each locality.

Two peasants stood staring up at it in a puzzled way. One of them wore high black boots and a dirty black suit, and over his shoulder he had swung an old tea pot and a canvas bag. His companion, hardly more than a boy, was dressed in a worn patched suit of grey and leaned on a big crooked stick. They had just come in from their village, it seemed; and here in this sanctum of the law, they scowled at this map of their new Russia, trying to understand it all.

I left them and entered the large main hall where the law had been taught for generations to sons of noble families. It was crowded with peasant deputies now. About half of them were soldiers, and there was a sailor here and there. The civilians were neatly dressed in black. They sat like school

boys at the high desks, listening to a middle-aged man who looked like a professor. He was a Social Revolutionist, well known for his writings on the land problem. His talk seemed to absorb them all.

The Social Revolutionists, who have always centred their propaganda largely on the peasants, were still by far the strongest party in the villages; and last summer they were decidedly in control of the Peasants' Council. In fact, I had heard from Milioukov, and other leaders of the Cadets, that the Council was no truly representative body, but a mere gathering of those radical peasants who in the past had been won over by the socialist teachings. Here in their headquarters this was indignantly denied by the secretary of the Council, a little man with a pointed black beard. And yet he himself, I learned, was a Social Revolutionist.

"The Congress was organized," he said, "soon after the revolution. It is true that the proclamations were sent out by us from here — both to the young peasants at the Front and to the old ones back at home. But that is practically all we did. The rest was done by the peasants themselves; our agents playing little part in the local village elections — because our groups were not ready to act. The whole revolution had come so unexpectedly. So in the armies and in the villages the peasants themselves chose their delegates. Of the 1325 who met in the Congress here, a little over half were soldiers from the armies; but they were peasants all the same; and

practically all of the others came direct from the villages, dressed in their rough peasant clothes. They would have no congress arranged by us; for there is now a strong and growing feeling among them against men like myself, the so-called 'intelligentzia.'

"They made speeches and argued for many days, and often nearly all night, too; and at last they elected this Council of 283, on the following basis: five deputies from each of the 18 Russian armies, and one from every million peasants in the villages. This Council is to remain until the National Assembly meets. It acts both for the peasants and also in conjunction with the Provisional Government and the Council of Workmen and Soldiers."

I was given a better insight into this peasant body when I came on another day to meet Nicholas Tchaikovsky, the famous old revolutionist who has studied the peasant for fifty years. I found him in the quarters of the Committee on Finance, of which he was the chairman. He was busy at a table talking to some of the deputies, while a tall young peasant soldier stood on guard close by. While he talked to me for an hour or more, soldier and peasant deputies kept coming up with checks to be signed. He seemed like a grandfather to them all. A tall handsome rugged old man, nearly eighty years of age, his hair and his long beard were white, but there was vigour still in the grip of his hand and an almost joyous light in his eyes. He seemed to me younger

than many young men whom I had met in Petrograd; because their minds were theory dry, while his was still quite open to change and new conditions. He had a strong glad vitality, and the youth of a great hope; for here in the midst of endless problems, he was making his last great fight for the thing he had dreamed of all his life.

"I have almost forgotten my English," he said. "I feel so deep sunk in Russia these days." He laughed and went on: "I am busy day and night — either here or in committees or presiding at large meetings. I am old, but at least I feel young in the morning. And there is such a tremendous chance; I feel so sure that Russia will come out of these troubles really free — I mean free in the great sense of the word. We have started now and we shall go on until we gain real liberty.

"I have been for the war from the start," he continued. "The war is here, and it would be a crime to put the revolution first. So far as possible, we must postpone all our social questions until after the war is won. But this has not been easy. It is difficult for foreigners to understand how hard it is for Russia, weary with the war, and now with all the added chaos of revolution and change, to go on and do her part. The problems are tremendous, and among our leaders we have had few practical men. One faction has followed another, each with its own ideas and plans and theories studied out of books. They do not know real conditions. But

the real needs of Russia are now rapidly rising to view and forcing men's minds to open and change.

"All socialists must learn to work with other parties. In order to hold the nation together, we must have not a socialist but a coalition government. If we try to go to extremes we may bring a confusion that will put us in danger of domination either by the Old Régime or, still worse, the German autocracy.

"It is hard to tell as yet how far the Bolsheviki and the Maximalists will go. Their power will depend on their hold upon the armies. Nine tenths of the soldiers are young peasant lads. The war took them from their villages, plunged them into army life, and gave them wider, more radical views. In the army they talked everything out; and moreover, army life was a break. They felt themselves loosed from old anchors and a part of something new. Great forces whirled around them, and all kinds of new ideas got into their minds. It was too much for the peasant boy. He became like a kite with too light a tail. At home his peasant father is like a kite with a tail so heavy that it is hard for him to rise. But his son at the Front swoops round and round — and what he will do before he comes down, it would be hard to prophesy. But sooner or later the power will shift back to the villages. For the lads will go home and settle down. Then will come the time for practical building. We shall need hard work by practical men.

"Already such men are gathering — from the

various socialist groups, from the radical wing of the Zemstvos, from the co-operative societies — and last but not least, from the peasants themselves. In this Council there are deputies who belong to none of the parties — plain peasants who know what they want and are looking about for a practical program. Their first desire is for more land, and on this point they all agree. It will be quite impossible for the great land owners to keep their land. The only question is whether the nation, after taking over the land, shall lease it to the peasants or divide it up among them. Shall it be held as private property or shall it be worked in common? There are many shades of opinion here, as to how it shall all be done.

"And you should get this from the peasants themselves — not from the young peasant soldiers here, for you will find them much the same as the deputies in the Soviet (the Council of Workmen and Soldiers). And your friends in America have heard enough of the Soviet. They hear only of the soldiers and the sensational doings here. Get the point of view of the older men — both here and in the villages. Go and see them in their homes, and find out what they really want. For remember, they make the great mass of the Russians, and in the end they must have their way in any true democracy."

With my interpreter, that day, I talked to one such deputy. We found him upstairs in the dormitory, where on long rows of iron cots the deputies of

the Council slept. A few lay sleeping now in their clothes, or reading books or papers. On one cot sat a thin elderly peasant, who wore steel rimmed spectacles and was intently reading a pamphlet. He was dressed in a clean linen jacket, and his long black shoes had been carefully oiled. His face was tanned — a narrow face with high cheek bones, grey beard and hair and earnest blue eyes. When we stopped by his bed, he looked up with a smile and his voice was low and kindly. Although he knew nothing about us, he apparently trusted us soon. He told his story simply.

"I am a peasant from a town on the lower Volga," he began. "We heard of the revolution about a week after it started; and at once we turned out the old police, and chose a district committee to send delegates to Petrograd to demand a Peasants' Congress. There were no rich land owners down there; the good land all belonged to the Crown. We took this land and drove away the Czar's officials, and made up our minds that we would look after it ourselves. This was hard work, for in our district the war had taken for soldiers all but the cripples and the old men. We worked all day out on those fields, and nearly all night, too — for in June in our country night is not dark. But we saw that we could not get in the crops.

"In our neighbourhood, then, we had a meeting of about thirty delegates elected by the villages, and these thirty chose me to go to the Front in order to

get some labour. It was a long journey, for in those days the trains kept stopping and changing their minds. Every one was talking. But at last I got to one part of the Front and talked to the soldiers' committees there. All was done in order. I got from them four hundred boys, four from every company, and I made each one sign a paper promising to come back to the Front as soon as he was sent for. Then I took them all in a crowd on the train and brought them to our villages, to help us to get in the crops.

"But they will return when they are called, because in my home we are for the war. From the Crown lands we have given the best half of the hay to the army, and kept the poorer half for ourselves. We have also sent to the army 20,000 roubles in cash, and thousands of poods of ground meal and wheat. If the boys at the Front do not keep up the fight, we old men have voted to take the guns. I have a son in the army, and if he comes home I will go myself. For in order to get a free peace, we must fight. Germany has for very long been a danger to all Europe, and so we must defeat her now. If we don't, those German Generals will soon put back the Czar in Russia. They will not allow us to be free men.

"As to the land, each peasant should have what he needs. He has now only two and a half desatinas (about six acres) of the worst land in the neighbourhood. It is sandy soil. You see, my town is down on the Volga. It is very beautiful

there, it is all level, with woods and fields. But the best land always belonged to the Crown, and the soil we had was sandy. Still, if now each peasant gets two or three desatinas more, that will be quite enough for us.

"How shall we divide it up? Our land Mirs (village community bodies) will be the ones to manage all that; and a larger district committee will no doubt be over them. I think that all over Russia the land will be taken from the large owners and leased to each peasant on easy terms. How long the lease will be, has not yet been decided; and whether he shall pay it in rent or in taxes has not been agreed upon. But all will be done in order. Much of the money that comes in from all these rents and taxes will help to pay the five billion roubles of debts on lands now owned by foreigners. We must honestly pay these foreign debts. Whether or not we shall pay the pomeschiks (Russian land owners) for their lands, we have not yet decided — but in my district I am sure we shall never pay for those Crown lands. For the Czar and all his family have had quite enough from us.

"Not only the peasants will manage all this. We shall get help from honest men. The school teachers are soul to soul with us. The priests are not, and we do not like them, but we have not touched the lands of the Church. In the village next to ours, they have sent for another priest; but in our town we did not bother, for we do not go to church often

these days. So we shall not want the priest to help us. Nor shall we take advice from the Zemstvo (district legislature), for most of those men are land owners, and so they are against our plan. Besides, we have our own land committee and need no help or advice from them. We must do all in order, but it must be for our good.

"And this is the way we shall do it. A great National Assembly of delegates from all the people will soon meet in Russia. In our district are about 450,000 souls, and so we shall be allowed to send two or three delegates to the Assembly. This is how we shall choose them. I shall go through the villages and call together the village Mirs and ask them what men they wish to send to the volost (township) meetings. There are twenty-seven volosts, and each will choose one delegate. These twenty-seven will then meet and decide which two or three shall be sent to Petrograd. For myself, I should like one delegate who has good knowledge of the law. We shall need him in the Assembly, for it will be making many great laws. Also one who understands the schools, for the new free Russia must have fine schools. Also one who very thoroughly understands the land, for that is the greatest question of all.

"All the delegates must be good honest men. We do not care about parties. We do not even know what party we belong to. All we want is land and freedom. Whoever wants that is a revolu-

tionist. The thing is very simple. One man came to our village and talked of political parties and asked to which party we belonged. We asked him, 'What do you want? Land and freedom?' He said he did. 'Good,' we said, 'we want it, too, So we are revolutionists.'

"At present in our district we have enough food to live on. From every hundred poods of grain we send twenty-five to the Front. We won't send any to the cities, because here in Petrograd it is not well, and Moscow is almost as bad. There is too much talk and disorder; and this is bad for Russia — both in the war and the revolution. We send our grain to the Army and to workingmen in those factories that are really doing work for the war. We must win the war. Until it is over we can manage for ourselves, and the big questions we can leave for the National Assembly.

"In our town we have our own plan to keep order. The court house is there, but we do not go; for we think it is a sin to take our quarrels into court during the war and the revolution. If any among us have a dispute, they come to our Committee, and if the neighbour witnesses say that it was Ivan's fault, then Ivan says, 'All right, brothers, if you all believe I am wrong, I will pay.' If he does *not* agree, we say to him, 'Wait till full order is established and then you can take this to court if you like.' And so the matter is settled. One angry fellow said to his neighbour with whom he had quarrelled, 'Now is no

time to sue you, brother — but after the war, you old thief, I will sue you!' And so it has happened in every case. To fight each other is a sin against the revolution. We must be brothers. So we shall be free."

I asked the old man whether he thought that his country was going to stay in the war. For some moments he was silent.

"Yes," he said, "I am sure of it. All the old peasants are ready to go. Most of us want peace badly, and many are almost ready to stop; but you see, if we should try to do that, those Germans are so greedy that they will march into our land and try their tricks among us. And then you will see that we will decide all over Russia to fight for long years! We will win our freedom — for we must!"

"And then," I asked him, "what kind of a Russia will it be?"

He put his hands on his knees and wrinkled his brows reflectively. The peasant on the adjoining bed turned over and awoke with a snort. But the old man did not hear him. There was a glimmer in his eyes as though they saw a promised land.

"It will be glorious life," he said. "It will all be in the country. There we live better than in the towns. We have better meat and bread; and we have wool and flax and bark, in order to make our clothes and boots. We can build our houses, too. We don't need the big towns — we will do it ourselves. And that will be Russia. Do you under-

stand? Most of us in this country are peasants, and so we shall be always, for that is a fine healthy life.

"But there is one thing we greatly need. No, two things," he added. "First, we need machinery. When my son had gone to the Front, alone on my farm I had to work so hard it nearly took my life, because I had no good machines. But here in this little book I was reading, I find how easily such work is done by machines in America." The old peasant uttered the word "machine" as though it were his religion. "We have so few machines," he said. "We help each other by loaning them 'round; but even so, they are too few. Last year we clubbed together and bought eighteen fine ploughs for two hundred and fifty peasants. Then we had a lottery to see who should get them. In the lottery I lost." He paused and seemed to remember that time.

"What else will there be?" I asked him.

"We shall have no such police," he said, "as were under the old government. And all that bribery must be stopped. We already have a fine doctor and a hospital and a good school. We must have more schools. That's the second thing. First, machinery — second, fine schools. We need agricultural schools very badly. We know very much and very little. Do you understand me? I am an old man and I love my land — I have loved it for nearly sixty years. And so I know much about my land, and yet I know very little. I never learned science and all its thoughts about making good farms.

But the young boys must know all that. We must have good schools to teach them. When we have won our full freedom and our land, the next two things for all Russia will be schools and machinery. That's all. We shall need nothing more. My town is a beautiful quiet place. On the river is rich fishing. The fellows sing. It is peaceful there. It is lovely country, with fields and woods. I want all Russia to be like that."

He was silent for a moment, then looked abruptly up at me.

"What do you think of us in America?"

"Some of us understand," I said, "but many are impatient." Again he was silent for a time.

"It is like this," he said slowly. "Some men are climbing up through the mountains. They have been climbing many days. Brigands have attacked them, and often they have lost their way, and now they hardly know where to go. They are half starved, for they have had only a few hard crusts of black bread to eat. But these men must reach the top, for on their backs they have carried a treasure, and this treasure is for Christ. It is freedom and peace and brotherhood. They have climbed and starved and fought until they are very tired. Some of them hardly see where to go. They say, 'Brothers, wait — we must find the path.'"

He paused, looking down at his long brown hands.

"Well, and then a young man joins them. He

has come up by an easy way. He is not tired, he is well fed, he is very strong and he has no wounds. His eyes are clear and he sees where to go. He wants these men to reach the top. How do you think he will do it best? Shall he be impatient, or help them?"

To help them, we must understand. We must realize that Russia may not settle down for years. And so we should not wait for that; we should seize every possible chance to give aid. We cannot afford to leave the field to those thousands of agents from Berlin who are now swarming through the land and ceaselessly working day and night. We should work as hard as they. We should grimly refuse to be disheartened or give up, no matter what disappointments fall.

For in Russia there will doubtless be many sweeping changes still — until a government is formed of, by and for that mightier throng of a hundred and eighty millions, in cities, towns and villages — in Russia vast and turbulent, filled with a seething chaos of gloom, despair and fierce revolt, of hopes and stirring visions, dreams for the future of the Slavs and the entire human race. A mighty nation unprepared and facing its great chance with doubt and only slowly opening eyes, while an enemy presses in from without, poisoning the Russian mind through spies and secret agents: an enemy stern, despotic, making a last desperate fight for the life of kings

and emperors, and straining its very utmost, through fomenting inner strife, to discredit and bring to ruin this great attempt at democracy.

Will the Russians build a government of, by and for the people? On the answer to that question the hope of a liberal Europe hangs.

## CHAPTER II

### I.

IN the meantime, any one who believes that Russia is no longer a determining factor in this war, is blind to the true state of things. What happens in Russia is bound to affect the radical forces in other lands. For the overdriven world, torn and starved and blackened by war, is at last beginning to seethe with the things that make revolutions. In Europe at the present time there are 30,000,000 men in arms. For the most part, this stupendous mass has been under firm control. But now over 10,000,000 are in revolt, and what they will do it is hard to tell. They are the force in Russia today, all factions are bidding for their support. And even if their government makes peace tomorrow, they are not through; for you cannot demobilize 10,000,000 men accustomed to arms without giving rise to disorders so vast as to be felt around the world.

Moreover, out of the chaos of rioting and civil war into which Russia is plunging now, there may arise in the next few months some leader or some big idea around which a considerable part of the Russian armies will rally again. For the Russian soldier is by no means a coward. In the past, he has fought as bravely as any soldier on the earth. He will not

fight now because he sees no cause for which he will give his life; in his mind there is still no connection between the revolution and the war begun by the Old Régime. But deep down within him is that slow burning passion, that semi-religious zeal of the Slav, which, if once it is aroused by some tremendous purpose or some great personality, may yet become a terrific force — in a revolutionist army.

For three years we have read of disciplined armies. Here is one of another kind. And for those of us who are watching this war with an eye to what may lie ahead, it is well to try to understand clearly and in full detail the growth and organization of these committees of soldiers, which have shown such real vitality that the fate of Russia seems now in their hands. For what has happened in the army is a deep and vital part of their whole revolution, which we as a democracy should do our best to comprehend before trying to pass judgment. It may affect all Europe more than we can realize.

2.

The most comprehensive view of the rise and swift development of the Russian committees of soldiers, was given me in August by General Verkhovsky, then in command of all the troops in the region about Moscow. He became soon afterward Kerensky's Minister of War.

A tall man about forty years old, slightly stooped, with close-cropped black hair and a high receding

forehead, he wore glasses over serious eyes, and spoke with a strong accent a slow deliberate English. Altogether, he appeared more like a student than a general. And yet he wore the Cross of St. George, for conspicuous bravery; and only a few days before, in the open court of the Kremlin, he had addressed thousands of soldiers with such success that after his speech they had seized him and tossed him three times high in the air, which is the Russian soldier's way of giving three cheers for an officer. Here was a man who, placed in command of nearly 3,000,000 mutinous troops, had succeeded at least to some degree in building up a following. How had he done it, and what was his aim? I was interested to find out. I talked to him in the Kremlin, in a low red stucco palace there, close by the church where were crowned the Czars.

"To begin with," he said, "you Americans should understand what our armies were like before the revolution took place. Three-fourths of the Russian soldiers did not know how to read or write, and they had no conception of the State. They knew only that they had a Czar and that they must obey him or they would be flogged. They did not understand at all why we were at war with Germany, nor had they any idea of the danger to Russia if Germany won. No one had thought it worth while to explain. The army had been kept in hand by the discipline of the lash. There was no Russian army, but only an armed people.

" And so, when the war had lasted two years, the men began to show signs of revolt. In the summer of 1916, the whole Seventh Siberian Army Corps refused to advance; and this was no isolated fact. With little or no understanding of what they were fighting for, the soldiers mutinied time and again. I found disorders last winter at many points along the Front. There was a lack of food and fuel, of clothing and munitions. There was scrofula and scurvy all along the Russian line. Most of the best officers had been killed earlier in the war, so that many of the regiments had but three or four real officers. The rest were merely makeshifts with no military training. And the higher officers had too often been selected not for fighting qualities but because they upheld the Old Régime.

" That this Régime was growing pro-German, few of us had any doubt. Rumours of more and more intrigues for a separate peace kept reaching us, and most of us officers at the Front felt we would be beaten unless there was a speedy change. In December, I went to Petrograd to tell the real Russian patriots that unless there was a revolution soon, all would be lost.

" But when the revolution broke out, to the ignorant peasant soldier the new freedom meant sheer anarchy, freedom from duties of every kind. From what he had known of his officers, he feared that to obey them might lead him back under the Old Régime. And he wanted none of that. He had

come from the 'dark people,' the peasants in the villages; and he wanted an end, at once and forever, to all the heavy poverty that had weighed the peasants down. The political and the social revolutions were mixed in his head. The Bolsheviki urged him to rise against the 'bourgeoisie.' And the only 'bourgeoisie' at the Front were the officers, who had better pay and better meals and living quarters. So the soldiers turned them out. There were many German agents, too; and written proclamations were sent over from the German side. The situation was made worse by the fact that the Allies refused to agree to the Russian peace terms of 'No annexations or contributions.' The Russian soldier gathered from this that the Allies did want annexations. He put them down as imperialists who were in the war for what they could get.

"But the Russian soldiers are children, accustomed to guidance from above; and so in forming their new committees they almost always included certain officers they could trust. Although I had been Chief of Staff of a newly formed army division, the soldiers, sailors and workmen of Sebastopol made me chairman of their head committee there, which controlled both the Fortress and the Black Sea Fleet. And so it was at other points. Only where there were no really liberal leaders to explain the true aims of the revolution, did the soldiers mutiny against the Provisional Government.

"Meanwhile in Petrograd, Kerensky had begun

to do the first thing that was needed — to replace the higher officers by men in whom the soldiers had faith. He transferred me to Moscow and put me in charge of one-fourth of the armies. I found utter disintegration here. At once, where it was possible, I put into the higher commands officers whom the men could trust and who at the same time had had real military training. It was hard to get the two combined, so instead I often put in a man for his qualities as a soldier, and then gave him as his aide an officer fitted to explain to the men the plans of our new government.

"To get a better life, we said, for the whole Russian people, we must save the revolution from enemies within and without. In Europe there had been *two* Czars; and the one in Berlin was still on his throne, and was straining his utmost now to win such a victory as would endanger not only Russian liberty but freedom in every liberal land. 'And so, Tovarische (comrades), we must fight!' Through the soldiers' committees we spread the idea that every soldier must obey, must drill and get ready to go to the Front — to defend the revolution. In my region, I was able to put my supporters in control of many soldiers' committees, so that the simple soldier heard the same thing from his officer and from the soldiers' committee that he himself had organized.

"So much for education. In this we have still made only a start, for we have had to fight against both the German and the Bolshevik propaganda

against the war. And therefore, for those who refused to obey, we must of course resort to force. But what kind of force? That was a question so difficult that at first we did little or nothing at all. But we have made headway even there.

"The first step was the handling of individual soldiers who took advantage of lack of restraint to commit all sorts of petty crimes. For such crimes we formed in each company a little court of soldiers, while for the more serious crimes we organized regimental courts that included a few officers. This system had a large success and is spreading through the army. Soon every soldier will understand that for each offence he will be punished, not by hostile powers above but by his own comrades-in-arms.

"The second question was how to control not only individuals but whole regiments in mutiny. For this, of course, we had to wait until we had won a strong support. What we tried to do was to show the men that our new discipline was a vital part of the revolution, and that all mutineers were therefore counter-revolutionists. In this we have already had some success. At Nizhni Novgorod last month, when several regiments mutinied, our organization was strong enough so that, with the approval of the soldiers' committee here, we were able to send detachments of cavalry and infantry and artillery to Nizhni. There we surprised the mutineers and so were soon able to bring them to terms. Their lead-

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THE BOLSHEVIK "RED GUARD"

ers are in prison now, to be tried not by a soldiers' court but by a high court martial. But in the meantime this whole affair was explained in a proclamation, 100,000 copies of which were sent to the committees of soldiers under my command.

"In brief, we have always tried to work not against the committees but through them. We have always explained as we went along. It is slow, but it is the only way to build up a real and democratic discipline, based on the consent of all. And no other kind is possible here. We can issue no arbitrary commands, as they could under the Old Régime. We issue every order in the name of the revolution, and we try our uttermost to make every soldier understand.

"And by this plan we have at least made considerable headway. The soldiers' courts, both higher and lower, are beginning to handle now all the individual crimes. Mutiny is on the decline. Regiments are beginning to drill back here in the depots, whereas a month ago there was still no drill at all. Before, my staffs were isolated. Now, they are connected by telegraph and telephone. From the depots we are already able to send regiments to the Front. And there, while as yet they will not advance, at least they stay in the trenches and are holding the Russian line.

"The retreat at Tarnopol, with its terrible loss of life, was a lesson to all mutineers. For the Old Régime saying still holds true, that, 'It takes a

clap of thunder to cause the Russian peasant to bow and make the sign of the cross!' "

3.

This was the point of view of one of the highest men in command. A somewhat similar viewpoint, though from a different angle, was given me in Petrograd by a leader in the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. The majority of that Council was in favour of going on with the war. All summer their speakers at the Front were trying hard to build up the morale. And this man was one of three in the Council's "army committee," which had been directing their attempt to restore some measure of discipline.

A Petrograd lawyer before the war, he had enlisted as a volunteer, he had been fighting for nearly three years and had become an officer. He was a socialist of one of the moderate factions. In figure, trim and vigorous, with a strong dark face and clear black eyes, he spoke English fluently. His voice was hoarse, because for three days and nights he had been almost constantly speaking to soldiers at the Front.

"Practically all real socialists of military age," he said, "have been in the army ever since the war broke out, for that is a part of socialism. You must socialize danger first of all. If your country is in danger, certainly you must bear your share. But that does not mean you must blindly obey a

government like that of the Czar. And so when that government would have made a separate peace, we turned out the Czar and his followers and put in a government of our own.

"I was down at the Front at the time. In our officers' mess, composed of men of all political parties, we had talked against the Old Régime; for we knew they were hindering the war in every way that was possible, and were in constant touch with Berlin. Then we guessed they would try to bring on a fake revolution in Petrograd, in order that they might have an excuse to break their agreement with England and France. But their fake revolution soon became real; for the Cossacks from our division, who had been summoned to Petrograd to put down the disorders, turned against the Old Régime, even firing on the police. Other regiments did the same. The army made the revolution a success within a week.

"And at first among our officers there was immense rejoicing. But then, as the revolution dived deep into our whole national life, and meanwhile played the devil with our soldiers at the Front, most of the officers changed their tune.

"In our sector on the West, there was food for only thirty-six hours. After that, each man for himself. And the soldiers took things into their hands. Most of them acted simply like a lot of boys turned loose. They talked and argued and sang songs; they hoorayed for the great revolution and got food

wherever they could. As a rule there was no violence, but here and there they seized the chance to pay off old scores with officers. Then came the Bolsheviki — and German secret agents, too — starting trouble everywhere, haranguing the soldiers and giving out leaflets, persuading them to climb out of the trenches and fraternize with the enemy. Meanwhile, the false rumours spread that there was panic everywhere in Russian towns and villages — and robbery and murder. And hundreds of thousands of soldiers went home, both to protect their families and to get their share of the land, which they heard was to be given the peasants. Within a week there were in Russia hundreds of long heavy trains, the cars packed full of soldiers, while others rode upon the tops and others ran the engines. There were some frightful disasters. One train ran away on a long down grade and collided with a freight train which was filled with dynamite.

" If any one is a pessimist as to the lack of discipline now, he has only to think of those early days and of the improvement we have made. But at first our work went slowly; and it was a tragic position for those officers like myself who were known as radicals and who therefore still had some control. For the simple soldiers said to us,

" ' Now all is changed. We need not die, and we are going to live like kings! To begin with, we want bread and peace.'

" And we could give them neither.

"They said, 'We are peasants. We want the land.'

"And we had to reply, 'You must wait for that until the war is over.'

"So they said, 'Then the revolution has done nothing for us at all!'

"Many grew bitter against us because we stood out for discipline. Since last spring I have received 450 letters threatening me with death for having betrayed the new liberties.

"Some say that the soldiers' committees caused the confusion. It was not so. The confusion came first, and grew so bad that the soldiers saw they must restore some kind of order and system, if only to get food supplies. So they began to form their committees. They organized first by companies, and soon there were hundreds of such committees, each hunting about for food supplies, on foot or in motors or even on trains. They saw this method would not work, so the small committees began to combine in committees for each regiment. But even this proved a failure. Not only to get food supplies, but to settle all kinds of questions between themselves and their officers, they saw they must have a stronger and wider organization. They came to some of us for advice, and we then directed that one officer and four men from each regiment should be sent as delegates to a congress of our army. There were 16,000 delegates representing 600,000 men. The congress chose some fifty men to form a

head committee, and this group was left in charge.

"And this happened all along the Front. With certain variations, each one of the eighteen armies worked out a plan about like this — one big committee for the army, one for each corps and for each division, for each brigade and each regiment. That is the system in force today.

"The soldiers were by no means against all their officers. There was a good deal of violence against the officers who were believed to secretly favour the Old Régime; but the average soldier's attitude was not vicious or vindictive; it was simply that of a peasant boy who had lived in a small village, knew nothing of the aims of the war, had been in the trenches for three years and saw no reason for getting killed. He was often utterly staggered by the power and the problems that rose up in front of him; and his instinct was to turn to educated men for help. In our first army congress, 16,000 soldiers elected fifty deputies; and of these, fourteen were officers, two were colonels and one was a captain serving on the general staff. To this group I belonged.

"But there were many officers who felt nothing but disgust for the whole revolution, and would do nothing to help our work. This attitude was especially true among the men in the higher commands. They wished to try to abolish all the new committees. We knew it was impossible, and we felt that through the committees lay our only chance of continuing in

the war. Little by little we tried to build up a new revolutionist army.

" In the committees we tried to cut out all discussion of the land and other social problems. We said,

" ' Our part in the revolution, boys, is to hold back the enemy, and give Kerensky a chance at home to build a new free Russia. If we let the Germans in, there will be the devil to pay; and in the mess that follows, the Czar may climb back on his throne. We've got our job cut out for us. There are problems enough right here at the Front without borrowing any more from home.'

" We tried to keep them working on such matters as the food supplies and other immediate daily needs. We tried to hold them all in line.

" But it has not been easy work. It has been a constant struggle between us and the extremists to control the great unwieldy mass of soldiers in each regiment. It has been a process of building up a structure that is then pulled down — but not all down, and so each time we build something stronger. It has been like this. Soldiers arise in a regiment as violent agitators, gain power and are made delegates to committees higher up. But the farther up they go, the more problems they must face, and with the responsibility they grow more moderate in tone — until they seem too moderate to the fellows at the bottom; and then new agitators come climbing up to push them out. It is like a great herd of buffalo out there on your American plains. The lean

starved animals make a rush and so push out to the front of the herd, and there they find rich grass to eat, and so they soon grow sluggish — until more lean beasts from behind come rushing on and shove them out.

" I remember one big meeting we had of a special army congress, called to decide upon whether or not to restore the death penalty. It was in a railroad station with a huge arched roof of steel. The place was packed with soldiers, 16,000 delegates, and often it seemed to shake with the roar of cheers or angry voices. I was the presiding officer, and I found it hard to hold them down. I recognized speakers on both sides, but all through the crowd were Bolsheviki who knew I was against them. They kept sending up to me letters threatening me with instant death.

" At last one note was handed up on which had been scribbled,

" ' If you don't let me speak in five minutes, I will shoot from where I stand.'

" To this the soldier's name was signed. I summoned him up to the platform, and then I read his note aloud. The chap was beaming with delight because he thought he had me bluffed. But I said,

" ' I have brought you up here to tell you that you cannot speak, my boy! Now begin to kill me! '

" After that, the poor devil was nearly mobbed. I then announced to the whole crowd that after the meeting I would walk back to my quarters along a certain road, in order to give a fair chance to all

those who wished to take part in the shooting. The result of our long discussion was that we voted for the death penalty. But the faction against it was so strong that they have made trouble ever since. The question is far from settled yet.

"And so it was with Kornilof's command that no army orders from now on should be discussed in the lower committees, but only at a congress representing the whole army. The army committee approved of this, but we have not yet been able to bring the whole mass into line.

"The real test of our new discipline came with the order for an advance. Two weeks ago our army congress voted for an offensive, and then at once came the tussle to get the mass of troops to agree. We worked literally day and night; and when the time came, it seemed at first as though we had succeeded. When the first line went over the top, they ran forward at such a pace I had all I could do to keep with my men. We took two lines of trenches, and at some points even three, advancing for three miles in all. But then was shown our weakness. For the first line had been composed of the minority whom we could trust. The second line, thrown into disorder by shells from enemy batteries, refused to advance. So we waited out there all day and all night, and then were driven slowly back.

"We had learned our lesson. The mass of our army was not yet ready for an offensive. And so, since then, we have simply tried to hold our line as

best we can, and meanwhile to continue building up our discipline. It is hard to see ahead, these days, but at least we know we have made a start.

"As to our higher officers, we have of course removed all those who would support the Old Régime; but this has not meant deposing every general who is conservative. For myself, when I hear a general addressing the soldiers loudly in favour of the revotion and so receiving tremendous applause, I at once get an uneasy notion — first, that he is not a real fighter; and second, that he is not sincere, and may soon be shouting as loudly against the revolution and possibly winning as great applause, because he is so eloquent. We want *blunt* leaders, men who are fighters and do not care to interfere with politics. We want such men to have control in matters of army strategy.

"But on the other hand, I am sure that the troops could not be held together without the committees we have formed. The committees are needed constantly to explain all orders to the men and so to act as go-betweens between them and their officers.

"The Russian soldier is like a child. It is hard to say which way he will turn before all this is over. But no matter to what excesses he may go in the next few months, if he ever gets into as big a mess as there was in those early days last spring, I think he will turn back to us. In my regiment at the start, the soldiers came to me and said, 'Where are we going to get the grub? How ought we to organize?

You know all about such things. Help us get this started.' And so they made me chairman of their regiment's committee. When they found they could trust me there, they sent me up to the army committee; and from there they sent me here. And here in the All-Russian Council one-third of the soldier deputies wear on their breasts the white cross of the university graduate."

4.

A third view of conditions at the Front, I was given by a man in the ranks. In Petrograd one afternoon, coming into the Tauride Palace, headquarters of the Council, and making my way through a dense crowd of soldiers loudly arguing, I went into an inner room; and there I talked with a tough little man who was dressed in an old brown uniform, worn threadbare, patched and covered with stains. He had a round determined face and wore glasses over small twinkling eyes. He had been in America two years, and he spoke broken English earnestly.

On his own story he did not dwell. In 1905, a boy of twenty, he took part in that first revolution; and later, when it was put down, with several hundred thousand others he was sent to Siberia. From there he escaped through China and went to San Francisco. For a year he worked in Montana mines, and later drifted to New York. When the revolution broke out, he started at once for Russia. Arriving there and learning of the chaos in

the army, he enlisted as a volunteer. He was soon at the Front; and working his way into the confidence of the men, he became one of the many speakers who, under the control of the Council back in Petrograd, endeavoured to restore the morale.

"We knew it would be very bad," he said, "for Russia to drop out of the war if Germany came out on top. So we have gone the limit to make our fellows understand. I have been on the Riga Front. When I came there first, it was a mob. The soldiers were abolishing almost every law in sight. At first they were all talking in crowds; but then they chose committees, and things got a little better. When officers gave small orders now, most of the soldiers would obey; but if there was any order to fight, the deputies must meet and decide. Things got better, then they got worse. The higher officers were the limit. They said, 'We won't help you — it's no use.' About half of the under officers helped, but even then it was no cinch.

"On the Riga Front it was like this: First, there were honest-to-God Bolsheviki who wanted peace and a big revolution — quit fighting and make a new Russia right off. They said to our fellows, 'This war would be over tonight at six-thirty if it weren't for England.' They said Kerensky had sold out to the bourgeois English government that would not give up German colonies and wanted things all her own way in the East. They said, 'No rich bourgeoisie are your allies, no matter in what country.

This revolution is going all wrong. You did it — now they take it away. So go back and take Russia for yourselves. Then the German soldiers will do the same, and in a few weeks it will be like that all over Europe.'

"Well, with these honest-to-God Bolsheviki were German spies who sneaked around; and from the German trenches wooden guns shot bundles of papers across to our fellows. And the Germans talked like this: 'We want peace — we ain't got any scrap with you. Go on back to your homes and we'll go to ours. We're dead sick of this war — it's for nothing now except for the bourgeoisie in England. Your new government does what London says.'

"And the counter-revolutionists handed out the same line of talk. 'This disorder is bad,' they said, 'it's bad. The Old Régime was better for you — it would have made peace this summer. But your new free government is getting you killed for England. A hell of a government, that is! Come on, boys, back to the Czar!'

"We were up against all this line of talk, and the Bolshevik papers were handed around by millions. Kerensky now has shut them off, but all the things they said and wrote have stuck in the minds of the soldiers.

"The fellows are tired — they are tired. They have had three years, and they want to go home. We work and work, but it's a slow job. I tell it to

you for a fact — on the Riga Front the discipline is worse than it was two months ago."

He was to start back at eleven that night, on a train so packed with troops that if he got even half a seat, he said, he would be lucky. The next day he had to make speeches to two divisions of soldiers who had refused the week before to go back to the trenches. I tried to get some picture of the strange turbulent life he had led for two months, day and night, always moving about, getting snatches of sleep in crowded trains or in automobiles, forever facing hostile crowds.

"Oh, yes, I go," he told me. "I go to base towns and talk to the boys, or out to the Front and get together the fellows who are in the reserves. I talk to 200 or to 5000. No difference — it's always the same — they never like to hear me. I am no fool, so I learn how to say a few nice things to make them feel good; and then they often cheer me. But the minute I get to the word 'fight,' right away there is a damn big noise. Other soldiers jump up from the crowd and begin to talk against me. Then they all get in bunches and every one talks. Often they won't let me talk at all. They say, 'If you talk, we will kill you!' I call the bluff — get away with it — but that's all the good it does.

"One crowd of fellows shouted, 'We don't want you to talk to us! We want you to fight with us! You are coming to the trenches, my boy!' More of their bluff. But I spit and said, 'Hell, yes. Sure,

I'll come.' So, I got out to the front line. There was not much fighting — only a little. I was there ten days, and between shots I talked right along. I said we must keep in the war till we had the Kaiser asking for a job on the subway in Berlin. And after three days and nights of this talk, some of the fellows changed their minds. I had them where I wanted them. But then the Regimental Committee kept me in one company. They said to themselves, 'This guy is a bug — he's a disease. We must keep him in one place or he'll spread!' So they kept me there for quite a few days. Then I got one of the fellows to send for me a telegram up here to the Soviet — and back came a wire and I was let go. I went on about my business.

"But it's a bad business, all the same. Any minute the fellows may go home. Will they fight through the winter? There ain't a chance. I tell you these boys are tired. They are tired. They have fought three years — they don't know what about — so they want to go home. The only way that I can see how they will ever fight again is some very big danger to Russia."

5.

In addition to such men in the army, Kerensky had enlisted the support and co-operation of many groups and organizations that were working for the war. The leading spirit in one of these was from Moscow —"a man of the Moscow type," as I heard

him called by Russians. It meant that he was the practical kind. Of medium height and build, he had alert and vigorous eyes. He wore glasses and he had black hair and a small moustache. He spoke almost perfect English with a rapid nervous force, for an hour or more one evening over tea and cigarettes. Here, in brief, is what he said:

"When the war broke out, I offered myself as a volunteer, but was refused on account of my eyes. So I started organizing the work of receiving our exchanged prisoners who came back home from Germany. Tens of thousands came through our hands, many of them in bad condition, ragged, crippled, sick and dying. There were also those who had escaped. In the three years before the revolution, nearly fifteen thousand of our lads had escaped from Germany. And these chaps appealed to me. Most of them had come from the farms and the factories and mines where the Germans work their prisoners. To escape from such places and to make one's way across Germany and get home, a man has to take his life in his hands. And fifteen thousand got away!

"Then came the revolution, and the troubles in the army. And that gave me my idea. To talk to those shouting mutinous soldiers you need a man of unlimited nerve and quick thinking. I said to myself, 'My escaped prisoners are such men!' And so I started on my plan. Since the revolution began, eleven hundred more have escaped; and I organized them as fast as they came. We formed a special

committee and got permits from the General Staff to let them all go down to the Front and talk to the soldiers — for two months. Only two months, because unless he is trained to the job a man's voice and his ideas give out after that much talking.

"Well, for two months I had each man go along the lines telling the soldiers that this idea of Germans being their brothers was all rot. They described the German brutality and the tyranny of their system both in the army and all through the land. They said,

"'The German government's system is bad for the world and must be fought until its sharp teeth are all pulled out. Not till then has Russia a chance to be free. The Kaiser will never leave us in peace. He talks lies to you now, so that you will stand off and let him defeat all your allies. But then he will turn his armies on *you!* And so, Tovarische, this is the truth. We know it is not a pleasure to die; we know because we have been near to death; we are not soft gentlemen talking to you. But we say you must do as we have done — make war upon the Kaiser!'

"Well, so they have talked, and their work has been hard. You Americans should understand that the Russian soldier is as brave as any soldier on the earth; but all men are human, and in no army will many men go over the top unless there is iron discipline. And to restore that, takes time — and more time. We keep three hundred speakers always at

the Front, and we back them up with leaflets — about half a million in all — giving the facts, plain, ugly and bare: the testimony of prisoners as to the conditions in the German prison camps and in the factories and mines where our fellows are worked to death.

"We keep three hundred men at the Front, and the other eight hundred in their homes; for as soon as one of our men at the Front gets all worn out with speaking, we send him back to his village to rest. And we say to him,

"'You have learned not only the bad in the Germans but also the good: their strong points, their up-to-date methods and technical skill, on their farms, in their factories, mills and mines. You have had a chance to see just the things that make Germany strong against Russia. And all you have learned is just what we need, to oppose the Germans later on. For the Germans will try to conquer us in commerce and in industry, make us buy their goods and remain as we are, a nation of ignorant peasants — the dark people of the North! But we must get out of such darkness!'

"And our men are talking like this in small villages all over Russia. Their letters pour in from everywhere, telling me how they are teaching their friends the real strength of the Kaiser. And this teaching is quite as important as the talking they do at the Front. For when the war is over, America and the Allies on the one side, and Germany on the

other, will contend for a Russian alliance. And the Germans will make shrewd and clever propaganda here. Secretly they will start schools all over Russia —'Russian schools'— but they will be German! 'Russian newspapers!'— German newspapers! Twenty years ago, French was spoken here three times as much as German, but now German is spoken here more than French. How was that done? By accident? No. With the Prussians, there are no accidents. It was the effect of their careful plan to control Russia's destiny. More Germans can speak Russian today than all other foreigners combined; and still more will learn Russian and will come here, to teach and preach and write their Kultur — and to sell their goods, to sell so cheap that our people will give in and buy.

"So you should win our friendship now. I do not want to say this as a threat. I speak as I do because I myself am so eager for your friendship. I know what it can mean to us and to all the ideals that we both hold. Help us — help us all the time — no matter what our armies do. Have patience and try to understand the troubles we are facing. Our country is in a great revolution. It is hard for our government to act — for they must explain; they must always explain. They can use little time to build a new nation, for they must explain to the people first. And most of the people are slow to see. To the mind of the average peasant the very word 'government' sounds like a curse. So our

present leaders must stop and explain — to the army, to the cities and to all the villages. It is like a tragic Sunday-school. A great new religion must be explained to a people that is still in the dark. So where are the men with both the minds and the time to do the practical building? That is where we need help from America."

6.

I have tried to give the view-point of those who believed in "explaining" everything as they went along, and so building up a government based on the consent of the governed. In their words I have tried to give an idea of the Russian soldier's state of mind, the reasons why he was ready to hear the Bolsheviki. But from all I learned last summer, I think that Kerensky and his friends might have won out in the army, were it not for the activities of a third and more conservative group that had rallied around Kornilof.

This noted Cossack general believed that no improvement could be made in army discipline until the soldier committees were wholly done away with. He felt that most of the trouble had come from those first "fatal orders" of the Provisional Government, abolishing the death penalty and proclaiming that all soldiers could elect their officers. To remedy the mischief done, Kornilof and his supporters were working ceaselessly to restore a rigid discipline. With the slow and discouraging progress

of Kerensky's plan, their pressure rapidly increased; and when at last Kerensky agreed to restore the death penalty at the Front, Kornilof ordered wholesale executions of mutineers. More than once, whole battalions of soldiers were slaughtered by machine guns; and the stiffened dead bodies were stood up in rows along the fences, with placards on their breasts to announce,

"I was shot because I was a traitor to Russia."

For a time this method seemed to succeed, and Kornilof's power grew so fast that the more conservative elements turned to the "little Cossack general" as the strong man of the hour, who was to lead the nation out of anarchy and on through war to victory. His adherents were by no means confined to reactionary elements. The so-called bourgeois liberals, and even considerable sections of the working people in towns, were sick to death of confusion and wanted a strong leader. Moreover, they knew that Kornilof was against the Old Régime. And meanwhile in the villages there were millions of peasants who both approved of continuing in the war and were also deeply hostile to the radicals in the towns, whom they lumped all together under the term of "Bolsheviki." These peasants gave small welcome to deserting soldiers. I visited scores of villages in which deserters did not dare to show themselves in the day time, but kept in hiding in the woods.

"Do you see that stick?" asked one old peasant,

pointing to a heavy grey club lying on top of his brick stove. "That's for my son if he deserts," he informed me grimly.

In other villages I found they were sending grain and fodder to the soldiers at the Front, but would send nothing to the towns until men "came to their senses" there. And in one small river hamlet, the keeper of the general store pointed to the dusty street and said:

"That's where we jumped on one of those Bolshevik devils who came to speak against the war. We kept jumping on him — and so he died."

Such men, so far as I could learn, were but a small minority of the entire peasant class. But I met still other peasants who, although they wished a quick end of the war and a great dividing up of the land, were kept from disorders by a belief, or rather a vague instinctive dread, that somewhere in Holy Russia, behind the present government, invisible but invincible, still lurked a vast mysterious force — they called it, "the real government" — which might at any moment send its Cossacks over the land to punish all who had broken the law. This dark myth I discovered in several parts of the country. It was still another element tending to increase the force of Kornilof and his faction.

His power came to a climax about the end of August at the Moscow Conference, where he made a speech demanding the utter abolition of committees in the army. His speech was greeted by a storm of

cheers from the bourgeois factions there, but Kerensky and the socialists stuck to their former policy. So Kornilof, two weeks later, resolved to take things into his own hands. With possibly two divisions of his Cossack followers, on whom he felt sure he could depend, he advanced on Petrograd. I was there at the time, and he came so near that one night we heard his first big guns. But the fighting stopped almost as soon as it started, for when his Cossacks were informed that they had been brought to overturn Kerensky and his government, they revolted almost to a man and placed Kornilof under arrest.

In brief, the " strong arm " method was proved an utter failure. Later on, it may succeed; but at that time and at that stage of the Russian revolution, it was shown to be without support by the rank and file of the army. Moreover, it caused a reaction, a tremendous radical wave, that undid Kerensky's work and led to the coup d'état of the Bolsheviki.

7.

I tried in the previous chapter to give their attitude toward the war. Briefly repeated, it was this. They believed that a " real revolution " in Russia could not be accomplished while the nation was at war, for the needs of war and revolution were directly opposite. Moreover, the Bolsheviki were sure that by proclaiming to the world a " revolutionary peace," they would soon get a response from the

masses in Germany and Austria, as well as in England, Italy, France. All last summer, they told me, they were in weekly touch with the extreme radical leaders in Germany and Austria; and from what they heard, they firmly believed that so soon as the pressure of war was removed, the lid would fly off in Germany and the proletariat would rise. How far they were right in this, only the coming months can tell, though at present it would seem they were wrong. Meanwhile I can only try to give some of the possibilities.

The Bolsheviki may soon lose control. For the same internal chaos, which has rendered them impotent now and is forcing them to accept the harsh peace terms of Germany, may cause the great mass of the Russians, who are thoroughly sick of disorders, famine, pestilence, civil strife, to put out the Bolsheviki and set up another government, even perhaps a dictatorship, which will meet their immediate problems at home. Whether this new government will be friendly to the Allies or subservient to Germany, rests in a very large degree upon whether the governments of France, England and the United States resolve to stand by Russia and still give every possible aid, or retire and give a clear field to Berlin to start laying the foundations of a Slav-Teuton empire.

On the other hand, the Bolsheviki, whether remaining in power or not, together with all Russian radicals, will probably strain every nerve, peace or

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GREAT MEETING ADDRESSED BY NIKOLAI LENINE IN FRONT OF WINTER PALACE, PETROGRAD

no peace, to resist the German autocracy. For these extremists are sincere. Of course, there are German agents among them; but there are German agents, too, in every Russian faction. The "honest-to-God" Bolshevik is out for a "real revolution," in Germany as well as at home. If peace be made, he will go right on with his secret propaganda in Germany and Austria, even though this be forbidden by the treaty he has signed. And if the Germans then come in to crush the radical régime, the Red Guards of workingmen in scores of Russian cities and towns will doubtless rise to defend their homes. And even though Russia be overrun by invading German armies, Berlin may meet calamity there. For in Austria and Germany are hundreds of thousands of workingmen who, when once they understand that they are being made to bear the increasing burden of the war to slaughter workingmen in the North for the sole purpose of conquests, may resort to such strikes and sabotage as will dangerously weaken the Kaiser's forces in the West. For his armies cannot live without the food and shells from the people at home.

With all their faults, the Bolsheviki have done more than all the diplomats to lay naked the blind brutal greed of the powers who still rule in Berlin. And in this work they will keep on. No matter what happens, it seems to me almost sure that Russia will remain a great storm centre of revolt, from which will go forth an influence that may perhaps

profoundly change not only the German autocracy but all Europe in the next few years.

For where is the prophet who can be sure what the next stage of this war will be?

## CHAPTER III

### I.

THE Bolsheviki have issued a call to the people of all nations to rise and take over the governments, the lands, the factories, mills and mines, and run them for the common good. But what response there will be to this call will rest in a very large degree on the example they set themselves, on the success they have at home. Will democracy work in Russia? Can the Bolsheviki, or some other radical government there, set going the wheels of industry and supply the nation in time with the great necessities that are so urgently needed today?

If they can, we may hope that the workingmen of Austria and Hungary, and even perhaps of Germany, too, may follow the Russian example — if not by insurrection, at least by such industrial pressure as will force Berlin to yield and negotiate for an early peace on the basis of no annexations; and meanwhile will force through such deep and radical reforms as will give the people from now on a real voice in their governments.

But if the Russian experiment proves a terrific failure now, bringing only civil war and rioting and

pillage, stagnation in the industries and famine in the cities and towns — the German rulers will say to their people, "See what revolution brings!" And the chance of a popular rising will then be very low indeed. For the Germans love order and system, they are of a practical race. And the German socialists today, as they watch the Slav experiment, are thinking, "Yes, this is all very fine. We, too, should like peace and democracy. If only we knew that it would work!"

Will democracy work in Russia?

When I think of that question I recall a drizzling Sunday morning in Petrograd last summer. I was in a railroad station, a place of sombre dirty halls, with a grey light straggling in through high narrow windows. A harsh buzz of voices rose from dense crowds of people there; and the women and children sitting upon heaps of luggage gave me a vivid impression of a nation "moving," of Russia in a state of change, jarred loose from her old moorings, restless, anxious, eager, hungry, groping her way blindly on. From the little chapel in a recess in one wall, the red lights of the ikons, which are sacred pictures, gleamed like little danger signals. The Great Road was not clear ahead.

At one of the ticket windows that had not yet been opened, the long line of waiting travellers had gathered in a noisy throng. Tickets were forgotten. "Where am I going?" had been changed to, "Where are we going, brothers? Where is Rus-

sia going?" There was a babel of argument, with workingmen and soldiers and well-to-do people all mixed in, men and women and young boys. Here and there laughter would break out, but again they would grow fiercely intent — while a Cossack perched on a high crate frowned down in his effort to comprehend.

"But meanwhile, how about their trains?" I could hear some impatient American ask. "Why isn't the ticket seller here to attend to his business? Why don't these Russian people insist on a decent train service? Big social ideals are all very well, but they're not worth a cuss if the trains won't run!"

Quite true. And because we are in this war to make the world safe for democracy, we should help them run their trains. For if we don't do it, Germany will.

What does Russia need today? What big problems must be solved by any government there, Bolshevik or Bourgeois, if it is to long endure? That question is simply answered. The people must have food to eat and fuel and clothes to keep them warm; and to get these things and distribute them, the railroads and the industries must be soon brought back to life, and the peasants must be supplied with millions of new farming tools, for their old ones are now all worn out. These problems are all interacting, one upon the other; and all of them depend on the question,

"How are the ten million men in the armies to be demobilized? How are they all to be brought back into productive labour?"

2.

I shall take the railroads first.

The railroads were demoralized before the revolution; and even before the war began they were most inadequate. Vast areas of the country still depended on post roads. An engineer told me that in winter, to reach his Siberian mine, he had to drive twelve hundred miles in a big covered sledge.

"We never stopped to eat," he said. "I heated food on a lamp inside; and so we went on day and night, only stopping to change horses, or between times to jump out and beat the horses' noses to keep them from freezing."

There are tens of thousands of sledges still on the long icy roads of Russia today, and another large share of the traffic is borne by a tremendous network of canals and rivers. More than half of the population still live in tiny villages miles from any railroad line. The railroads, for the most part owned and run by the government, are slow and inefficient, a system honeycombed with graft. About half the locomotives still burn wood instead of coal, and this requires more frequent stops because the wood burns faster. Their railroad sections are too short. Every sixty or seventy miles, both locomotive and engineer are changed; and this increases the

delay. The average speed of the passenger trains is twenty miles an hour.

Such conditions were made worse by the war, and still worse by the revolution. For weeks the soldiers rode about on trains that they had captured. Gradually things settled down; but meanwhile the trainmen, by repeated threats to strike, not only forced up wages but insisted on conditions that further blocked the traffic. They even considered the idea of having each section of the road managed by a local committee of the workingmen; but even the calm philosophical Russian train dispatcher set up such a howl at this that he was able to make himself heard.

In brief, Russia was clogged. The numberless veins and arteries that give to a nation industrial life, were fearfully congested. To get a sleeper to Vladivostok, I applied in Petrograd about the end of August, and was told that the next available berth was for the end of November. I could get a berth for that same week, but only from a speculator for three hundred roubles more. The same was true of the one night's trip from Petrograd to Moscow. The regular price of a ticket and berth was about thirty-five roubles. The speculator charged seventy-five, but you paid him and were thankful.

It was hard for those who could not pay. I remember a scene late at night in one of the Petrograd stations. Across the platform from our train was

a "local" guarded by soldiers from a frantic shouting mob. Those people, to get their tickets, had had to stand in long lines for many hours on the street. Now they came down the platform with a rush and began crowding into the cars. I have an ugly memory of two peasant women, with babes in their arms, fighting to enter the narrow train door of a car already packed and jammed — pushing, shouting, shaking fists into each other's faces. One baby screamed in terror, and the other slept as though dead. It was not a cheerful sight. I saw the same thing in other cities and in many little towns. I saw men and women and children covering whole tops of trains and clinging to their luggage.

Both the mails and the telegraph were thoroughly demoralized. A letter from Moscow to Petrograd took a week or more in the going; often it never arrived at all; and the average telegram was equally uncertain. This hampered the government in its attempt to bring system out of chaos. Orders were sent and not delivered; things happened and people never knew. The power of false rumour was tremendously increased. In September when Kornilof was trying to seize the government, I started home through Siberia; and at every station our train was met by crowds who begged for the latest news. Who controlled the nation now?

To me it was amazing how life went on as well as it did. On that Siberian journey, when Russia for

the moment was without a government, you might have expected disorder and rioting all along the line. It was not so. There were crowds of idle soldiers, but not one of them entered our car.

I remember one cold rainy night when our conductor stood off for ten minutes a score of angry soldier lads who wanted to climb on and ride. The next train was not due for three hours, they said. Why should they stand and wait in the rain? They only wanted to reach the next town. But our conductor was obdurate. Orders were orders and must be obeyed. And that little mob of soldiers obeyed, rather to my own regret. And so it was all along the line. The Slavs have a deep instinct for getting along without any law. The engineer ran his engine, because it was his daily job; and he stopped to chat as usual with the man who ran the water tank, or the man who loaded the tender with white birch logs from the forest close by.

And back in Central Russia, late one summer's afternoon, a crowd that had been waiting for a train long overdue, instead of growing impatient, sat quietly on their luggage; and soon they were talking absorbedly. In one group my interpreter heard a discussion as to what had become of the souls of the three million Russian soldiers who had lost their lives in the war. Where had they gone? Was there really a God? . . . Then at last the train arrived, and there was the usual scramble. But later, when we were all packed in and the train was lum-

bering slowly along at about twelve miles an hour, the conversation went on again, with argument and anecdote, with laughter and with friendliness and with the deepest interest — while to me, poor practical Yankee, we seemed to go slower all the time. I jerked out my watch:

"Now we're *five* hours late!"

At one station, when I was nearly asleep, I was roused by a heart-rending chorus of bellows from close by. I jumped out with my interpreter and found that two freight cars filled with calves had just been hitched on to the train. About fifty calves were packed in tight, homesick, frightened, bleating like mad. But nobody seemed in the least surprised at these additional passengers. The brakeman, with that frankness so common among his countrymen, explained to us confidingly:

"A fellow asked me to hitch on these cars. And I said, 'Why not, brother? We'll go no slower than before.' So he gave me ten roubles for each car. And is any one troubled? Not at all."

But there was trouble, all the same. Everywhere I saw long lines of freight cars upon sidings — empty, broken down perhaps, or as often filled with food supplies that were sorely needed somewhere. And at Tornea early last summer, when I entered Russia from Norway, I saw acres of boxes, barrels and crates reaching through the train yards and off under the trees of the forest.

To help remedy such conditions, our American

Railroad Commission arrived. But at first our men were met with distrust; for both the German agents and the Bolshevik exiles, returning to Russia from New York, had described us as a nation utterly honeycombed with graft; and this picture had been strengthened by the indisputable fact that Russian government agents here had been forced by our manufacturers to pay enormous prices. When we entered the war, these agents could hardly believe it when they were told that our government was arranging that they should get supplies at cost. This had not been our record hitherto. And so in Russia our railroad men had to face suspicion on all sides.

Another obstacle in their path was the open hostility of the railroad officials there. For after a keen investigation, Mr. Stevens, the head of our mission, had declared that without any great addition to the present rolling stock the efficiency of the roads could be raised nearly forty per cent. And this had set Russian engineers buzzing like so many hornets. One high official, with whom I talked in the Ministry of Railroads, told me most emphatically:

"There is nothing the matter with our system. Our only trouble is the lack of cars and locomotives. We have had poor goods from America. Hundreds of your locomotives were so far below specifications that we could not use them at all."

It was a most unpromising start. But after weeks of argument, Stevens was told to go ahead. His first work was on the Siberian road. Tens of

thousands of tons of our goods were piled up at Vladivostok, waiting for cars to haul them. Our commission soon discovered that many cars and locomotives idle on sidings or in yards were still available for use. All they needed was repair. There had never been many adequate repair shops in Russia, and half of them had now shut down. So the Americans started two huge repair shops of their own, one at Vladivostok and the other at Harbin. Meanwhile more locomotives began to arrive from America, and were quickly assembled. The troubles that Russian engineers had been having with our engines were soon remedied in our shops. And meanwhile all along the line Mr. Stevens made technical changes in the system of operation. The result was that within a month he had raised the road's efficiency at least twenty-five per cent. I came out about that time on the Siberian Express. In the nine days' journey we were only two hours late; and our Consul in Harbin, where I turned to go down into China, told me that in Vladivostok half of our goods had already been moved.

Having started the work in Siberia, Mr. Stevens went to Mohilev to see what could be done on the railroads that supplied the Russian Front. But only a few weeks after that came the Bolshevik coup d'état. And at the time of this writing it is impossible to tell whether or not the new government can come to some agreement with ours, under which our railroad men will continue to give aid.

The Russian railroads must be now in worse confusion than ever before. I shut my eyes and see long lines of cars all over Russia waiting — while the people wait. Will the people keep on waiting? Can the Bolsheviki move all those cars in time? If they cannot, they will have to give way to some more practical régime.

3.

The Kerensky government had at least made a beginning. Not only, with our help, had they started to clean up the railroads; but their Ministry of Supplies was working hard to get the grain, the meat and sugar, clothing, leather, ploughs and tools, that the people need; and to distribute these supplies to the places where they were wanted most.

To do this, in true Russian fashion, they had built up a system so elaborate and complete that when you saw it on paper you felt all Russia's troubles were solved. If red tape could feed people, then the Russians were to be gorged. The plan included a network of committees large and small, in cities, towns and villages, in every section of the land. But then, also in true Russian fashion, some of the planners began to despair. One, with whom my interpreter talked in the Ministry of Supplies, was a tall thin man with a hollow chest and rather long dishevelled hair. He had honest, likable, friendly eyes.

"The general position is this," he said, in a tone which implied it was hopeless. "My department

of this Ministry controls all the agricultural tools, domestic or imported. Another has charge of the wheat and rye, and another of the oats and hay. The plan is later to control all the cotton goods as well, and leather, fuel and sugar. The scheme is so enormous that to direct the work from here would take a perfect army. So we are leaving things to be done by committees out in the provinces.

"I hope it will go better," he continued patiently, "when the entire mechanism of our plan is understood. But to tell you the truth, we are getting but little co-operation yet; for the country is quite unprepared for a socialistic plan of this kind. I myself am a socialist, but in the last few months I have found this is not a socialist country. Our people are not made like that. Each one is greedy for his own and thinks very little of the State. We discovered this almost at the start; but in the exaltation prevailing in those wonderful days, no one cared to point out the fact. We had clothed the people with ideals, and now we found them naked.

"It reminds me of the prince who wished to be clothed in the thinnest garb that any mortal had ever worn. His tailor promised that the suit should be as thin as the air itself. And when he came back with the costume it was wholly invisible. When the prince appeared before his court, the courtiers all applauded and cried, 'How beautifully our prince is clothed!' But suddenly a little child rose

up and cried out shrilly, 'The prince is only naked!'" The Russian turned with a tragic smile. "That is the trouble now," he said. "In Russia the prince is the people. But there is no little child to cry, 'The prince is only naked.'

"The revolution has shown to us that the layer of civilization here is about one thousandth of an inch. Some of us are even afraid that our beautiful revolution, like a soap-bubble, will suddenly burst. We men of the universities are perhaps sufficiently socialized to take part in a socialist state; but for the bulk of the population, peasants who for centuries have been living in the dark, long years of education and patient teaching are required — teaching of a practical kind. We should be sending thousands of our young men to America to study the methods on your farms and your great ranches in the West, and then come back as teachers.

"How to handle these 160,000,000 peasants, it is hard to tell. Again and again I have seen the agents of our government, young school teachers with high ideals, go out among the 'dark people' and there soon lose all faith in their work, on account of the utter lack of response that they found in the villages. For the average peasant's vision is as cramped and dim as the hut where he lives.

"The teaching itself was in part to blame, for it was never real enough. The teachers had spent half their time in college studying socialism and dreaming of revolutions, instead of setting them-

selves to the task of really learning their technique. I hope now that we are free, our students of the future will centre upon practical work and so become real teachers of the things we need to learn — all that modern science knows about the tilling of the soil. Then only will the peasants listen; and until they do, we shall never have in Russia the bountiful land we saw in our dreams.

"Well," he ended patiently, "in the meantime we do the best we can. But the plan is too big, and it comes too soon. The people are still in darkness."

4.

In Moscow, at the headquarters of the big local committee there, I found a man who had kept his faith. He believed in the plan so deeply, and tried so hard to be friendly and convince us it would work, that I felt drawn to him at once. But he gave me, too, an impression of the involved immensity of the problems he and all his kind were facing in Russia last summer.

I found him in a building whose long dark halls were filled with soldiers and civilians, men and boys and student girls. Some carried trays with glasses of tea, and all were talking rapidly and with the greatest good humour. The man whom we had come to see was a thin, ungainly chap, red haired, freckled and washed out, a thoroughly uninspiring sort, until he got into his subject. But then I for-

got his unpleasant voice, and saw only his eager friendly smile.

"All this work of ours," he said, "is under one great national plan, which reaches through committees to every village in the land." And he displayed a Russian map all speckled with committees — committees by the thousands, specks of every colour and size. It really was a beautiful plan. "So far, my own committee here only deals in grain," he said. "For that, the system works like this. The district committees all over Russia gather statistics on the grain. They learn where there is not enough and where there is a surplus; and all this information is sent back to Petrograd. The government has fixed prices for all grain and forage; and where there is a surplus, the peasant is allowed to sell, both to co-operative societies and to private merchants whose agents come out from the towns. But these merchants are allowed to sell only to the government — which knows where the grain is needed most. The government then sends it there, and so it is distributed. In short, the government takes the place of the great wholesale merchants.

"We need only to have patience," he said. "Here in Moscow you go out on the streets and find that prices are still way up; you see long lines of people in front of the stores; and when they get in they find little there. But when our whole plan has gone into effect and our government controls our life, these troubles will all be remedied. At such

a job you cannot expect speed, for we have to implant in men's old minds new ideas, and that takes time. Then, too, the mails and railroads are so slow it makes it hard for us. In short, you must get the whole system going before you can make a real success of any one of its separate parts. Things here may seem bad enough, but without the work that we have done you would find things infinitely worse. We have at least made a start."

It was indeed only a start. I went out to the villages in three different sections of Russia. There I talked with members of the small supply committees, and I heard the same thing everywhere.

"Yes, we are getting statistics," said the keeper of a village store. "I am chairman of our committee here. Our fellows go out to the peasants, look over their fields and into their barns and find how much grain they have on hand; and we send the information on to the head committee of this district. But that is all the good it will do. The peasant will not give up his grain till he can be given in return not just money but actual goods."

"In Petrograd they have a plan," I remarked encouragingly, "to get these goods and send them to you." The merchant looked at his empty shelves.

"I wish they'd hurry up," he said.

In other villages I found that a few goods had already arrived. But this was the exception. For to get the things the peasant demands, the government must bring back to life the mines and mills and

factories; and in this immense problem, they had made but little headway.

5.

There was a dearth of steel, iron and coal. Last summer the iron and coal mines in Russia were producing less than half their normal output. There had been strikes innumerable.

"My men," said an engineer, who managed several iron mines, "used to work for a rouble fifty a day — about eighty cents in your money. Now they are getting eight times that, and are doing barely forty per cent. of the work they did before. The trouble has spread to the salaried men. Yesterday I had a wire from one of our managers that unless I raised his salary 100 per cent. within four days, he would resign his position. And it is like that everywhere — in the coal and gold mines, too. All Russia is disorganized. In a big mill here in Petrograd, a committee would come to see the boss with demands for higher wages. He would agree and they would go back, and the work would go on for the rest of the day. But the Bolsheviki in the mills would call a meeting that same night, and the next morning the committee would come back to the boss and say, 'It's all off!' And this happened time and again, till at last the boss got sick of it. The next time a strike was threatened, he said, 'All right, this breaks me, and I'm through! I'm going to shut down tonight!' The result of

his threat of a lock-out was that his men went back to work and have never made trouble for him since. And this is the only way I can see to save our Russian industries."

This plan was tried last summer; but in scores of cases where employers threatened a lock-out, the men instead of giving in took over the mill or the factory and endeavoured to run it themselves — as a rule, with such poor success that, even while they still had supplies of raw material, their output kept decreasing; and after the supplies were gone, they could get no credit in purchasing more. In some such cases they closed down; in others, they called back the owner, and the work limped on as before.

So the iron and coal were not mined. And so the steel mills slackened down; and the foundries of all kinds suffered both from dearth of supplies and from their own troubles with their men. And so there were few ploughs or tools to meet the demands of the peasant. Nor was there any prospect of giving him the clothes he needed or even the cloth to make them with.

I had a long talk in Moscow with one of the great manufacturers there, a man who had wide interests both in cotton and other industries. His name was known all over the land. Though his grandfather had been a serf, he himself was a multimillionaire. He lived in a palace in spacious grounds. In the rear was a large court of cobblestones, with a vege-

table garden in the centre and out-houses all around. A peasant gardener humbly bowed and took off his cap to us as we passed. Our appointment was for ten o'clock, and over the telephone we had been told that we must be prompt to the minute, for the great financier was busy that day. We arrived thirty minutes late. This was because my interpreter, who was working in a bank where he said they were "frightfully busy," had gone there first to tell his chief that he wanted a few minutes off. The few minutes became all morning, because the busy financier talked calmly on till lunch time. So many Russians are like that.

He received us in his study, a large room with a bare wood floor and a lofty ceiling. In one corner hung an ikon, with its little holy light. A typewriter stood near by. On his desk was an abacus, or counting frame with little steel rods strung with beads. I found it in all their offices. It is used for reckoning figures. There was also a sphinx paperweight and a modern electric lamp. Through the open door, I could see a great hall where the walls were hung with tapestries; while here on a wall in the study, was a portrait of the grandfather who had been a common serf. Our host was a man about sixty. He wore a house-jacket of black silk, and round cuffs with huge ivory buttons. His large grey beard was finely combed, he had a long thin aquiline nose and small blue eyes. He smiled almost continually, and now and then gave a low chuckling

laugh. He smoked many cigarettes. He was cautious in answering questions.

"It is hard to prophesy," he said, "about this revolution. Nobody knows what we are coming to. I myself keep out of politics; my friends all feel it is not our work. Moreover, affairs have for a time come into rather impractical hands and will have to be left to run their course — until everything, so to speak, is suddenly melted in the pot. Then I suppose will come a time for some decisive action. There may be a dictator. Who can tell? But my friends and I are all against a return to the Old Régime. We want a liberal government. A strong constitutional monarchy, on the British model, might be the most workable government here. For you see it must be workable; we really can't go on like this.

"How can they get food into the towns? The peasant will not give up his grain, because he cannot get goods in return. He has shut himself up in his village, and gets along quite nicely there. He has plenty of food and forage, and he is making his own clothes. Only in villages near the towns have the peasants been used to ready-made clothes. In all the villages more remote, they still make homespun garments of flax and wool and sheepskin.

"When the peasant does sell grain for cash, he soon goes lame on the money he saves; for while we put our money in banks and so keep it in circulation, the peasant stuffs it into his boots. In the

towns the workingmen also hoard. So the government is forced to continue issuing paper money, which declines in value week by week.

"We could get the peasant's money — for his wife is still eager to buy cotton goods. But in our mills we are producing only a little over half of our regular output; and most of this has to go to the army. Our mills are still working nearly full time, but the men do not work as fast as before. Still, their spirit is not bad. They seem to have a decided sense of the value of mills and factories. In ours, when the revolution broke out, they at once appointed a committee to guard against robbery, fire and breakage. They could not have been more careful if it had been property of their own. But through the summer their demands have kept increasing all the time. When the profit on a pood of cotton was only thirteen roubles, they demanded a wage increase amounting to eighteen roubles a pood. We granted this, and then raised our price; but at once our workers demanded a share in our new 'excessive profits.' And so there was another raise. What the end will be I do not know."

"What would you do," I asked him, "if you were the Russian government now?" He smiled at me as though to say, "How very direct you Yankees are."

"It is a time," he answered, "for taking a large view of things; I like to try to look ahead. And doing that, I see at once that what Russia needs

most is schools. Compulsory education will be the salvation of this land. For no matter what disasters fall, the real Russian people are not through. We may make many blunders; but our resources are so vast we can afford to make almost as many mistakes as you made in America. You had such abundant natural wealth that you could afford to squander and waste, and so it is in Russia. Remember we own one-sixth of the globe; and except for potassium, tin, saltpetre and a few other materials, we have everything we need in order to be independent. But we have even deeper resources in the hundred and eighty million minds of our common people. I come from the peasant class, and I know. Such a people cannot be spoiled by a short debauch of wild ideas. It is a dangerous illness, but Russia will recover, and her recovery will be made not by any miraculous laws but by the laborious process of industrial education.

"Hitherto, we have been a nation of peasants, but now we shall turn to industrial life. Just think of the Ural Mountains alone. Perhaps in no place in the world is there so much mineral wealth in so small a region. Siberia has just been scratched, and the same is true of the Caucasus and of Northern Russia. The Russian people are beggars sitting upon bags of gold. For to develop these resources, we lacked a strong national policy; we have had to fight hard against the general opinion here, that we should remain a country of farms. The Russian people have not seen that our mills are for the good

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THE BOLSHEVIK GENERAL STAFF

of all. In addition, the Old Régime feared the growth of industries, because they thought that workmen were more dangerous than peasants. So it has been in the last fifty years. We argued with the government, and at last they did elaborate a careful system of tariffs like those that built up the United States. But they left holes in the tariff wall, through which such foreign companies as your American reaper concerns could make them in the United States and then assemble the parts over here and so dodge the import duties.

"Still, we have made a tremendous start. In the Urals and Southern Russia fifty years ago the coal and steel production was absurdly small, while at present millions of poods are mined and made in what were once wild desolate prairies and swamps.

"And we have made that progress in spite of all that Germany has tried to do to keep us down, through commercial treaties that practically forced her goods upon us and meanwhile protected her against all Russian imports. So she has been able, in spite of all that we could do, to keep us a nation of peasants all through the German industrial boom. For these treaties, our Old Régime was to blame. Nor did they help us by subsidies. We asked them to borrow money abroad in order to meet our industrial needs, but they used the money thus secured only for building railroads and strengthening the army.

"So we ourselves saw the value in the revolution

last spring. And when at once our workingmen began to guard our property, we felt that they would remain our friends. For the socialist agitators have never been really close to the people. But we are close. Our fathers or grandfathers tilled the soil. And so it is with our workmen, too. Most of them were peasants and still keep in touch with the folks at home. At mowing time, they leave our mills and go home and help get in the crops. This is generally true in Russia. In each peasant family one or two of the sons go to the towns to work, but the others stay in the village. The war will make a difference there; for boys who have been in the army will grow restless in dull villages; by millions they will come to the towns; and Russia will be industrialized. But we shall not be like the Germans. They naturally take to the socialist plan of granting all the power to a strong centralized government. The Slavs have no such instinct. They are only too ready to split off in small local republics. This must not be allowed to happen; Russia must hold together as one tremendous nation. But that instinct for independence will keep state socialism down.

"In Russian mills and factories, most of the work is paid by piece, but the rate of pay is higher for work in hours over-time. And so, where the regular work-day has been shortened in the last few months, the men slacken their pace in order to have more over-time work to do. Another trouble is the

fact that in addition to Sundays we have nearly fifty holidays. A plan to abolish them came up before the Old Government, and might possibly have been tried; but the new Provisional Government has promised so much to the people that now they do not dare to ask them to give up their holidays. And this is the more a pity because we are in no condition where we can afford to have our mills idle a hundred days a year.

"We need more work-days and more men. The war took so many workmen away. At the very start we argued in favour of a selective draft. 'If you take all the men for the army,' we said, 'you will ruin the very industries that are needed in the war.' But the Old Régime was blind, and took the best of our workers away. If the war goes on, we must get them back. The new government should bring back all the skilled men from the Front, and replace them by idlers from the Rear; and they should also give us thousands of unskilled labourers. What Russia needs most is compulsory labour. Such a plan, if started in time, would also solve the problem of how when our big army disbands we are to get ten million men back into productive work."

6.

I heard of this plan for compulsory labour, both from other employers and from men in the government; but I saw little chance that the workingmen

would agree to any such idea — much less, the idle soldiers. For the Russian people were so overburdened in the past, that they have had enough of duties; the talk now is all of rights. And the ideal of national service so common in other nations today, is not felt among the masses in Russia — or rather, is felt in a different way. The soldier will serve his country — but only under the Bolsheviki, in the cause of the "real revolution." The workingman will serve day and night — but only on strike committees, groping and struggling for ways to build up a socialist commonwealth.

So the workingmen would not work. And in the face of a steady decline in production everywhere, both employers and employed displayed a calm, philosophical, thoroughly Russian attitude. They were deeply interested. "I wonder what's going to happen now?"

One Sunday night in Moscow, I took supper with an architect who for years had been tearing down the picturesque old houses to put up apartment buildings. But now he was celebrating the start of a "good long vacation." In the building trades, he explained, wages had been raised and raised until he could no longer put up a building even at cost.

"And I have a few thousand roubles left, so I am going to live on that till it's gone," he said contentedly. "If it's gone before Russia returns to life — well, so much the worse for me. But my life is a small thing, after all. Meanwhile, how do you

drink your tea? Clear or with a little milk? I'm sorry there is no sugar."

The workmen seemed equally unperturbed.

"Why should we worry," one of them said, "when we have everything in our hands? We work and get paid decently now. We stop work if we like and hold a meeting to talk about government questions. Perhaps we find that the prices of food have been raised again in the last few days. All right, then we strike again; and so our wages are raised, too. Or perhaps the boss is ugly and will not give us what we ask. All right again. We all go home and stay till we have used up our savings. Then we take his factory, and so the work goes on as before. The trouble with the mind of the boss is that he thinks he is needed here."

So the men watched over the factories with the loving care of future owners. The great textile manufacturer, who praised his men for guarding his mills, perhaps did not understand them as well as he believed he did. Or perhaps he understood quite well, but did not care to confide his woes to American correspondents. He was a subtle gentleman. I met another employer, however, who was an American, and he was far from subtle. In fact he fairly stuttered with rage, as he smote the document in his hand containing the latest demands of his men. He pointed to Article Number Nine, which read somewhat as follows:

"Meanwhile the owner shall not be allowed to

sell or lease his factory — because it is soon to be ours."

This plan of common ownership may now be tried throughout the land, for the Bolshevik program includes taking over all the "socialized industries." The railroads and the tram lines are already government-owned, as a rule; and the Bolsheviki propose to seize the larger mills and factories, as well as the coal and iron mines, and perhaps the oil fields, too. But they are not all agreed as to the new form of ownership. Many are jealous of trusting even a government of their own with such enormous powers. For the Slavs are not like the Germans. By instinct they are opposed to any strong centralized government, and take rather to the idea that the industries shall be owned and run co-operatively by the workers themselves.

In the last ten years in Russia, a co-operative movement has sprung up, and has grown so rapidly that it includes already over 12,000,000 members, organized in tens of thousands of local societies, large and small. Most of these, as yet, are unions of consumers for the purpose of purchasing goods; but a beginning has been made in co-operative production — especially in dairy work. These organizations form today one of the main constructive forces working throughout Russia underneath the turmoil. Their plan is steadily to increase their local organizations, spreading out all over the land, and so at last attaining the co-operative common-

wealth, where all industries will be owned and run by the people as joint partners. As yet, they have worked in silence; there has been little mention of them in the news; for their work does not make sensational headlines. Later, however, their voice will be heard.

In the past there has been little sympathy between them and the Bolsheviki; for although their goals are similar, one road is short, the other long. But from what I hear from Russia, these days, it seems to me just possible there may be some rapprochement soon. For already the Bolsheviki give indications of slowing down. Their program was to seize at once all the principal industries and run them like their armies on a committee basis. But how Russia can stand more committees just now, it is a little hard to tell; and from present signs it looks as though they did not dare to risk it. Already, in an interview, Trotsky has said that instead of taking over at once the factories and mills and mines, they propose to leave them for a time to be run by their present owners, subject to governmental control. For how long, he does not say. But it may well be, if he and his friends succeed in remaining in control, that with the fast increasing load of responsibilities, and with the accession to their ranks of the more moderate socialists, the Bolsheviki will settle down to a long protracted series of deep and fundamental reforms, that will first meet the immediate needs and will then lead slowly through the years to

that same co-operative commonwealth which both they and the co-operatives and socialists of every kind throughout the world have dreamed of.

7.

If the Bolsheviki take this course, it will multiply tenfold their chance of popular support. For it must not be forgotten that among the workers everywhere are many who are sick of disorders, men who want good wages, steady jobs and a peaceable life. Though they favoured the first revolution, they have been against the excesses that followed. As yet, they have not dared to speak out.

I talked with one on a crowded train coming into Moscow one Sunday night. On the two bare wooden benches of our double seat, besides my interpreter and myself, were a mother and her daughter and a little hunch-back student; and there was also a workingman with his wife and three small children. They had been out spending Sunday with his parents in the village. His wife was also of peasant stock, a handsome healthy young woman who never took her smiling eyes off her brood — except once, when she devoutly and rapidly made the sign of the cross, as the train went by a grave-yard.

"We go back to the village every Sunday," the man explained. "In Moscow I am working in a munitions factory. There, when the revolution began, all the fellows got together and said, 'Now we

must show what work we can do to help the great revolution make our new free Russia safe from the German Kaiser!' We went around ourselves and took stock, to see how much we had produced; and we tried to turn out more, to help our comrades at the Front. But then came the Bolsheviki, and they have been with us ever since. There are only a few of those fellows, but they have tin-plated throats. They never get tired of talking, and yet they don't know what they want. They say we must tear everything down, but what to build up they do not know. Still they keep talking right along, and nobody dares to get up and talk back. When one of our fellows spoke for the war, that night they shot him down on the street. And after that, what can we do? You see my wife and little kids. Can I afford to take a chance on being shot and leaving them, when Russia is in such a state? So men like me keep our mouths shut.

"In our factory the output has kept going down and down, while our wages still go up. That's fine, of course. I am getting thirteen roubles a day, but I would be willing to give up some to save the revolution. For what is ahead of us, we don't know. The price of food keeps rising. It's hard for my wife to buy at all."

His lean kindly face had grown anxious. But then he said, with a sudden smile:

"It's good to get out of all that talk and go back

to my village, where my brother Ivan is really working — in the woods and on the fields. For such real work makes a fellow believe again in our Russian life. What we need is a government that will get down to business — make all the work move right along — and yet not take us back to the Czar or even the great capitalists. We want our fellows to manage it all — *but they must soon learn to manage it right!*"

How many workers in Russia now feel like that fellow on the train? I wish I could talk to him tonight, and find out whether he has changed. But whether he has changed or not, that Sunday visit of his to the village is mighty important to Russia, these days. Hundreds of thousands of workingmen still own little plots of family land back in the villages where they were born. All summer they visit their villages; and in winter, when work on the land is slack, the peasants come into the towns. So the workingman talks to his brother Ivan. And whether or not the workers are to continue to support their Bolshevik government, depends in a very large degree upon whether this same government can so reorganize industries as to produce the necessities that Brother Ivan is demanding. To give him more land will do him no good unless he can be given, too, the tools he needs to till the soil. For his present equipment is so worn out that unless it is replenished he cannot do the work next year which is needed if Russia is not to starve.

And so all the problems in Russia today lead sooner or later back to the "dark people" in the villages. Until the peasant is satisfied, nothing is settled, nothing is sure.

## CHAPTER IV

FOR one who tries to fathom the profundities of Russian life, and to gather there the portents of what the future is to bring, one of the deep silent forces not to be forgotten is that religious feeling so widespread among the Slavs that in the past it has given truth to the name of Holy Russia. How much of the Old will the New retain? Is religion now to be sloughed off, or is it so deeply planted in the hearts and minds, the vague hopes and yearnings of the people in the villages — that now, though the form of religion be changed, its real essence will endure?

I think of a village churchyard, where, on a Sunday morning at the end of August, I sat in the cool fragrant grass and listened to the singing. It was the time when Kornilof was gathering his forces to march upon Petrograd and attempt to seize the government. All Russia seethed with revolution. But there was not a sign of it here. Around me the white birches softly rustled in the breeże, and all about on the tombs and mounds sat groups of country people, motionless and very still. Two old peasant women in black sat on a tombstone, side by side. On another, a mother dressed in white was smiling down at her baby and kissing him from time to time. Nearby was a large circle of girls in bright coloured

kerchiefs, listening to a thin girl in blue who was talking gaily in low, rapid whispers. On other tombs sat peasant men in homespun suits, with black visored caps in their hands. An old hen and some chickens wandered by. Small boys, in belted blouses of white or grey or blue or orange, prowled about. Two little urchins gravely squatted in the grass beside me, watching while I made my notes. I was using a carbon sheet, and to them the small piece of black paper was something to be watched with care — for there might be magic in it. A couple of young soldiers came 'round the corner of the church, and presently a sailor passed. But all the rest of these people were still.

With a yearning tragic beauty, through the windows of the church, came the chant of the peasant choir within. I could hear a high beseeching voice and then the choir's rich response. Not only the village priest was there, but monks and even a bishop from the ancient monastery just across the river. For this was the great day of the year, in honour of the local saint. The peasants had come from miles around and they had been here for several hours. Now and then, as a mass was finished, groups of people would come out and others would take their places inside.

Coming into the crowded doorway, I stood beside a mother there who was kneeling with her chubby son. The little church, with its white and blue walls, was packed and jammed with people. On

one side stood the men and boys, in sober suits of black or grey, motionless, with caps in their hands; on the other, stood the women and girls, in white embroidered kerchiefs and gowns of many colours. On the walls the ikons hung in heavy gilded frames; and in front a great dull gilded gate led back into the choir. The priests and deacons standing there were dressed in stiff brocaded robes of gleaming red and silver. Filmy wreaths of incense rose. And the hundreds of small candle flames all seemed reflected in the eyes of the motionless peasants around me.

"The dark people," they are often called; for in Russia the Dark Ages have reached up to the present day. But watching their eyes, it seemed to me that these people were far from darkness, that in their minds and spirits had been far more beauty and light than in those of our Puritan forefathers; that they had always hungered for light; and that the Church, despite all its corruption, had fed this hunger, quenched this thirst, with its vividly pictured dream of a life everlasting.

And they had made this dream their own. These men who stood so reverently, with their peasant caps in their hands, were a part of the Revolution, and perhaps the strongest part. This was one of hundreds of thousands of villages throughout the land wherein the future nation is to be shaped and moulded. And though I found them grimly resolved that all the land of the large estates in the

neighbourhood should soon be theirs, they seemed equally determined to hold to their religion.

In various parts of Russia I stopped in many villages. And though here and there a church was empty and the priest had been driven away, in only one case was I told, "We are through with the church and religion." More often it was simply a feeling of bitterness toward the priest; who, because he lived in poverty, had tried to eke out his wretched life by haggling over the size of the fees for weddings, funerals, christenings; or again had been obsequious to the neighbouring landowners and to officials of the Czar. In the country, on long drives and tramps on winding lanes and highways, I kept seeing wayside shrines and monasteries on low hills. And twice I met with pilgrims, part of the countless multitude of so-called "holy men," most of them from the peasant class, who for centuries have wandered through the length and breadth of Russia, begging their way, and being treated everywhere with kindliness and deep respect by superstitious peasant hosts. In village tea houses I found them — strange, uncouth creatures, ragged and foul — but they seemed to know they were welcome guests.

In the cities the same thing was true, though to a much less marked degree. In Petrograd, where in the past the influx of modern science has worked against religion, and where now the revolutionists are either hostile to the Church or more often wholly ignore it, I did find a decided decline in religious feel-

ing, as compared to what I had seen twelve years before. But even there the churches were by no means empty. Moreover, he who takes Petrograd as a guide to the real Russian life, is not likely to get a true idea of what is happening today

It is rather in "Mother Moscow" that one feels himself in the very heart and centre of the nation. And most of the colour and beauty of that lovable, friendly old town was in its churches, some of them half hidden in old gardens and in narrow courts shut out from the busy street by high walls. It was as though religion had burrowed deep into the city's life. On my rambles in the crooked streets, I could turn no bend or corner without coming on some church or some shrine or chapel. Their shining gilded spires, their cupolas and rounded domes, some old and faded, others new, pink or green or vivid blue, coloured the town's whole aspect. And always I kept hearing bells, some of them harsh and jangling, but others low sepulchral booms. Their insistent voices drowned out the hum and buzz that came from homes and factories, from barracks and from gay cafés. The Church seemed dominating all. From the roof of a high building, I would look down at sunset and see the gilded spires and domes flashing out for miles around, my eyes so dazzled by them all that I could not see the dwellings.

Descending then into the streets, and feeling there the draw and urge of "the great revolution," I would start off to some barracks filled with mutinous

soldiers, or to the headquarters of some strike. But suddenly on the crowded street I would be stopped by a denser throng gathered before some holy shrine or some dark old chapel. Men and women and children would stand by hundreds waiting for a chance to get inside, to buy candles and take part in the long solemn service. They would stand oblivious to anything around them.

And like a mighty fortress high in the centre of the town, stood the Holy Kremlin, an immense walled region of palaces and churches, the place where the "Czars of All the Russias" came for coronation. Here for countless generations, always upon Easter's eve, a vast concourse of people kept gathering and gathering until they were packed in a solid mass, and so stood waiting through the night for the moment when from one of the churches there should come a burst of song, to be caught up by the multitude, to swell in volume and to roll out over the awakening town. The song was, "Christ is Risen!" As they sang it, strangers would embrace, for that is the way of the Russians. In no other country of the world have I heard the expression "Brothers of Christ."

But all this, you may say, belongs to the past. What of today and the future?

Today there is revolution, so universal and so deep that it is impossible to tell what parts of the nation's life will survive out of the seething fires of

change. But this much is sure, that the Great Revolution, by which I mean not just a thing of theories and of sudden coups d'états, but a heaving of the inner lives of a hundred and eighty million people — this greater upheaval, in its first stage, not consciously but instinctively, held fast to its religious feeling and made it a part of its present joy. In those first "wonderful days" last spring that so many Russians looks back upon now with deep longing and regret, upon the streets of Petrograd as the first grey light of a cold March day fell upon happy multitudes, more than once an old familiar song arose and travelled down the street. And the song was "Christ is Risen!"

Then, as the active leaders plunged into the many problems demanding swift solution, the question of religion was lost in the general chaos. The whole machine of the Orthodox Church was quickly taken over, but what happened there was almost wholly ignored by the radical leaders. For although the Church for ages, part and parcel of the Old Régime, had stood against all progress, they did not deem it vital enough to merit serious attack.

And left to itself, but borne along on the tides of the new democracy, the Church began to reorganize. For if in the councils of Petrograd religion was forgotten, it was not so in the villages. The peasants began to turn out their priests or to send petitions to Petrograd that Church abuses should be

cured, that this House of God once run by the Czar in order to keep his peasants down, should now be stripped of its power for harm and given back to the people themselves. Instead of casting it from them, they took it closer to their breasts. It was theirs and they would run it themselves, and build a church democracy wherein all men should not only in word but in very truth be "Brothers of Christ."

This feeling spread to larger towns; it travelled silently over the land. Like so many other forces working in Russian life today, its voice was not heard around the world; its doings were not featured in great headlines in the press, because there was nothing sensational here. But there was something very deep.

"The Russian Orthodox Church," I was told by Mr. Charles R. Crane, who has been to Russia many times and has studied the Church for twenty years, "has worked the only orderly revolution in the land. Urged on and firmly supported by the people everywhere, it purged itself of abuses, drove out numberless priests and monks who had been known to be corrupt, and many higher officials subservient to the Old Régime. In little village meetings they elected delegates — plain peasants, men and women; and these delegates met in larger towns, and from these district gatherings other delegates were sent to great provincial assemblies. I saw the one in Moscow. There, thousands of men and

women, a large part of them simple peasant folk, elected a 'Metropolitan,' an official in the priesthood who ranks higher than archbishops. And for this office they chose a man who, while he had been active in church work, was not a member of the clergy — either of the Black Priests or the White.

"The Black Priests are the monks; the White are the priests in the churches, who know the people's needs. The latter have always, therefore, been closer to the common life; and in their ranks were included the more progressive elements. 'Progressive' sounds incongruous when applied to the Russian Church, but you would be surprised to hear some of the younger White Priests talk. So many of them, it seems to me, have caught the essential spirit of the revolution, while its excesses have passed them by.

"The congregations so organized, have resolved to take over all the immense and ill-defined church property, to be managed henceforth by boards of trustees elected by the people themselves. As time goes on, the people in every church in Russia will probably have a voice in choosing all church officials. On the other hand, they are not for wholly breaking past ties with the government. 'Let the Church remain,' they say, 'a part of the new government. But let there be no more persecution of other religious sects in the land. There must be real freedom of worship in the new republic.'"

So democracy is coming into the Church, and this may affect in no small degree the greater democracy outside. For in elections everywhere, but especially in the villages, the influence of the new Church is likely to be considerable — if not in the first elections, then in the succeeding ones. Last summer, the Cadets, the great liberal party in Russia, were already counting on this. Several of their leaders told me how, in the campaign which they were planning to make in the villages, they relied on the support of the village priests all over the land.

"The peasants are not ready," said Milioukov, in a talk with me, "to do without religion. It is too deep rooted in their lives. So they'll keep the priests whom they feel they can trust, and these priests will be a restraining force. The peasant will soon find himself confronted by urgent problems demanding for their solution abler and clearer minds than his own. The Bolsheviki will fail him there, for they are not practical builders; and so, as he has always done, he will turn to the former land-owner, the country doctor, teacher, village merchant, village priest. And the priest will not be last of these. So the new Church will be one of those forces that steadily rise through the months and years, while the voices that are so loud today will little by little die away."

With another Cadet, I went one day, in a certain large city of Russia, to an old palace where in the past a long succession of high officials had lived

in pomp and ceremony, holding little courts of their own. All that had been done away with now. A priest led us into a large sombre room heavily furnished; and as we entered, there rose to meet us a huge handsome man in a black gown. His hair was long and he had a great silky beard of brown; his voice was deep and musical. He was one of those liberal bishops who have been allowed to remain.

"Russia is in a bad time," he said, "but I'm sure the good God will help us. For the Russians are the most devoutly religious people in the world. They have wandered a little, but they will turn back. And their wanderings will have done much good; for they are struggling to bring democracy into our Russian life — and Russia needs democracy. We shall never return to the Old Régime. A constitutional monarchy is perhaps just possible; but I am doubtful even of that, for I know our people so well. They love republics and congresses; they love to gather and discuss and feel that everything is in their hands.

"Before they are through, the great land estates must surely go; and that is right, for we want more equality here. Just how it is to be managed, is of course a difficult question; but though our people make many mistakes, I know they will manage it right in the end. Because that is their way — mistakes and time wasted — but at last a solution truly great. And in all their trials and failures they will

perhaps have learned something deeper than the other nations learn by hastening on in practical ways without this searching of hearts and souls. Before Russia comes through this crisis, she will have drawn so close to the great bleeding heart of humanity that she will believe forevermore in the brotherhood of all mankind.

"I hope that after this terrible war all peoples will be brothers in Christ. And yet I want to see each nation keep its self-hood. Do you understand? You must remain Americans; we Russians must stay Russians — and then meeting as eternal friends we shall have the more to give to each other.

"We shall have more to give than some of you dream. I see for Great Russia a future now that may spread its influence over the world — not as the Germans spread their Kultur, but simply by the power of a religious brotherhood so vast that all the world will feel how good it is to be our friends.

"But make no mistake. To build such a nation we must put a stop to the wild ideas now being preached by the Bolsheviki and their kind. If such men had a use at the start, they are no longer needed now. And they are more dangerous to real Russian democracy than any enemies from without. They do not believe in democracy. If they could, they would seize the whole government and force their ideas on the nation, whether the people consented or not. And their ideas can lead only to confusion and despair. We who know the truth

have been silent too long. The time has come for speaking out. I have begun already to preach openly against them.

"And it is not only the Bolsheviki. Even in the Provisional Government are many men who are going too far. Their Ministry of Education has already taken from the Church its 35,000 schools for the children. This is unjust and it is wrong. Compulsory religious instruction is necessary to every child. The new Church must be given more power, not less — for a true democracy cannot be imposed from above, it must grow up out of the hearts and minds of all the people in the land. And the mass of the Russian people still hold to their faith in God."

To look into this matter of schools, a few days later in Petrograd, I went to the Ministry of Education. There it was explained to me that they had taken the church schools because as a whole they were so poor. In the smaller schools there were only the village priests as instructors, and even in the larger schools the system was most backward.

"But," said the official, "this will not mean the end of religious instruction. For here is a significant fact. At the time when we took over the schools, it was announced, by an immense Education Committee of teachers and workingmen and soldiers who have set themselves to watch over us, that our action in regard to church schools meant that re-

PEASANT VETERINARY DOCTORS

ligious instruction was now to be abolished. But instantly from the peasants in all sections of the land there went up such a cry of protest, that we have had to repudiate the Committee's proclamation."

The peasants insisted last summer that religious instruction be retained. Have they changed since then, or will they oppose the attempt of the Bolsheviki now to seize church property everywhere, close up church institutions by thousands, and at once abolish religious teaching in government schools? In France, when the radical government attempted something of this kind, there was not enough opposition to keep the plan from working out. But for Russia, I have my doubts. There is significance in the fact that already the Bolsheviki have modified their program by announcing that though the churches are now all government property, the people may still use them for worship if they so demand.

On the other hand, there will probably still be changes far more sweeping than the reforms that have been already enacted. Not only its organization, but its ritual and its faith, may be swept away like chaff; and the glittering hierarchy of saints, of angels and archangels, may fade like an empty dream. Their heaven, which in the past reflected the despotism down below, may now reflect the democracy. The ethical side of religion may be given dominance, and so the Church may win a place

in the life of the new Russia, as a practical aid to men, its work bound up as never before in the weal and woe of their daily lives.

It was so in olden days. For the early Russian Saints were more than religious teachers. They taught weaving, spinning, carpentry; they were pioneers in many crafts; and they themselves went out on the fields to work and teach the peasants how to increase their harvests. All men should live like brothers, and God helps him who helps himself — were among their guiding principles. And there have been many churchmen since to carry on the tradition of that sturdy brotherhood. They have not been found in the Orthodox Church, as a rule, but in the other religious sects that have grown despite savage repression.

For religion in Russia is a wider, deeper force than any church can contain in its walls. And it is this Greater Religion, this instinctive reverence toward life, this inborn brotherly feeling toward men, that is so likely to endure.

" If you want to find out what our nation will be," said a friend of mine in Moscow, " don't look at the storm on the surface but into the waters underneath — not so many fathoms deep. You will find the real soul of Russia there — not just a thing of theories, of what a few dreamers would like us to be, but what we Russians have really been, what we are and what we shall be."

And he took me to the Old Believers.

These people are a religious sect that once belonged to the Russian Church. But when, in the fifteenth century, the Church was taken over by the growing autocracy, there were many who claimed that this was done because the Church, with its teaching of the brotherhood of Christ, was considered dangerous to the rising power of the Czar. These people refused to be annexed; they clung to their old freedom and declined to change their ways. Even to many unessential minor rites and symbols they held with grim fanatic zeal. They kept their church as it had been, and were called the Old Believers.

Surviving the most merciless persecutions for hundreds of years, they came through the fires hardened; for to keep alive, they had to be strong. Many of them were Cossacks who lived out on the rough frontiers. From their midst have come not only most of the great modern farmers in Russia, but about half the inventors, too, and many big manufacturers. Today they are eight million strong, and are spreading everywhere. They may be a powerful factor in the building of the new nation.

"We are old believers in new things," one of their leaders told me. "Long ago, when the Czar of Russia emancipated all the serfs, one of our bishops said to him, 'This new thing that you have done is only part of our old belief — in liberty and

brotherhood.' And it has been so ever since. For the deepest part of our belief is our faith in the progress of mankind, through liberty and mutual aid, and hard work and education — always learning what is new — up the great long road to God."

At first they did not seem like that. When I entered their principal church, out on the edge of Moscow, I felt as though I were in a big tomb where all that was old had been preserved. I had come from crowded meeting halls and from scenes of violence; I had seen the streets of Petrograd swept by machine-gun fire; I had felt revolution on every hand. And this church seemed to me as dead as the past.

A ponderous, oppressive place of heavy grey stone arches, its walls and vaulted ceilings were thickly studded with gold frames, from which innumerable saints stared down; and the big bronze gate that led into the choir glinted rich red from the setting sun. It was quiet here. Only one woman sat in the pews; and farther forward a workingman stood with his grey cap in his hand; and with one foot advanced a bit to one side, he kept up a queer jerky swaying, half forward and half sideways — their manner of making obeisance to God. From the front of the church two groups of priests in plain black gowns droned back and forth, intoning in harsh sing-song.

When the ceremony had come to an end, a tall young priest with long black hair took us back into

the choir; and there he showed us many old books — huge tomes of music with a form of notation the world has left behind; old manuscripts, the large grey pages nearly rotting to decay, and pasted onto new leaves to preserve them. That was it. To preserve the old, to keep alive the peace and quiet of the past — this seemed the whole purpose of the place.

But from there we were taken to a small log cabin nearby, where lived the Archbishop, the head of their church. And here at once the whole atmosphere changed. Though this churchman had in his congregation many multi-millionaires, he himself preferred to live in a rude cabin of four small rooms. In the room in which he received us, the log walls were unplastered and the floor was of bare planks. Our heads nearly touched the ceiling. There was a table, a few wooden chairs and an ikon in one corner. And flanked on each side by two huge priests, black gowned giants with long hair, stood one of the strongest looking men that I had seen in Russia.

The Archbishop was perhaps sixty-five, but he was straight as an arrow still. He wore a black gown, and on his head was a tall purple hat. My look was caught at once by his face, by the indomitable strength in the bearded jaw and resolute eyes. His priests were of a similar kind, eagerly listening, friendly souls. We were there for several hours. We supped at the bare table, on clear tea and jam and small round biscuits hard as crusts. These had

been sent, the Archbishop explained, as a gift from his Cossack relations down South. The tea was in our honour, for the Old Believers as a rule do not drink tea or coffee, much less any fermented drink. As we supped, and the Archbishop talked, I kept watching that face of hard solid muscle and those keen grey flashing eyes. Through the deep little window in the log wall, the last rays of the sun shone upon him.

"I have been for the war from the start," he declared. "To drive it through to victory, this is in my Cossack blood. I have been a little doubtful of late, but now again I have strong belief. We must keep faith with our allies. I am preaching war, and I am sending our priests to the Front to preach it there. There can be no peace between Free Russia and the man who rules from Berlin. The Cossacks will never submit to such rule. We have had enough of despots.

"When we heard that the United States, the great republic, would stand by our side, our hearts all sprang for gladness. Never mind if you are of another creed. For although we know there is only one God, there are many ways of finding Him; and we know that you must have found Him, too — because you are free, and freedom is the only path by which men can climb to God. In our creeds we may be different, but we are brothers of Christ in arms.

"It is absolutely needful to draw close now to America and bind ourselves together both in trade and industry; because there is no way of bringing real freedom to our land except through the practical knowledge that has made your country what it is. To be free we must be strong. We must have three things — first, moral and technical education for every man, woman and child; second, all kinds of modern machines; and third, the political, social and economic organization required in order to apply the education to the machines.

"Broad moral education and practical instruction, these must both be bound together as tight as though they were one word. If you want a good engineer or a farmer or a business man, you must train him in such a way that there will be a continual grip between the scientific side of your training and the perception of the child. One child learns theories out of a book — and he will be a weakling. Another learns things out of books by instantly binding everything there to what he sees in his real life — and that child will grow to be strong. If you want to make a banker, let the child play at running a bank — with cashiers, money and all the rest; for so while his mind is sensitive he will learn the very essence of business, and will soon grow keen and shrewd. And you must also make him fair. We Old Believers have schools like that; we have started them in the last few years. And this method works with children almost like a miracle of God.

"For children love to imitate." A glint of humour came in his eyes. "Here is an example," he said. "The children of one of our deacons, who conducts the funerals here, have watched their father till they know the smallest detail of the funeral rites. And at times when you come into his home you hear such wails and lamentations that you would think it a graveyard!

"To this imitation instinct," he continued, "we appeal. And in this way we teach the young all kinds of technicalities. But we teach, too, the moral side. The stories of the lives of our early Saints in Russia, with all their practical work for the people, are wonderful books for our children still; for they teach them the real essence of a strong deep brotherhood. We insist upon strict discipline; for our boys and girls will need high minds and the purest souls — most of all in a free country; because there success will come only to the most vigorous fighter, and he must be clad in armour of deepest purity in his life.

"We forbid our people to drink vodka, brandy, wine or beer, or even tea or coffee or to smoke tobacco — first, because it hurts the health, and we are against suicide whether it be fast or slow; and second, because any Russian who buys such unproductive luxuries from foreign lands is no true Russian patriot. Over two hundred years ago, we warned the Russian people that by bringing in such foreign stuffs, their government wished to force

them under the yoke of foreign finance, to make them weak in body and soul and then to keep them down as slaves by the threat of foreign armies. For after the German merchant comes the German soldier.

"So we have forbidden such luxuries, and our people have obeyed. And if you wish to see the result, you need only look at the Old Believers, who have been for generations bred in such clean living. Few people know the happiness that comes to a man when his body and soul are clean all through. For myself, I am a strong man, and hard physical labour gives me joy. And look at my priests. They are giants. One of them teaches the children here, and he loves to have them run and shriek. It is fine for their lungs and for their souls, for he teaches them in every game that all must be done in such a way as to hurt no child; there must be nothing coarse. The girls play with the boys and work by their side, and there must be nothing to offend.

"You ask about our women. They have their place beside the men. This talk of woman suffrage, which comes to us from foreign lands, is only one of the many new things that is a part of our old belief. For in the days of frontier life we worked not only through our men but always through our women, too. We had women pioneers as shrewd as you could dream of. Why not make full use of them? Why throw away the strength and skill of half our population? So we have given our women a voice in the management of our affairs. In our schools

the girls are taught with the boys; and in many of our churches, the heart and centre of our life, you will find women deacons and priests. And that is as it should be. For God, who is all-powerful, could have chosen another vessel out of which to create a man — but instead he chose a woman. And so she is not to be despised in any way or manner.

"You say that you Americans have barely ever heard of us. That is very natural. We have done all our work in the quietest way, because for over two centuries, up to the year 1905, we had been persecuted. The Jews in Russia loudly complain of the persecutions they have endured; but they at least were allowed to worship unmolested, while we, because of our belief, were burned by thousands at the stake. A savage old Czar once said to his people:

"'If you find an Old Believer, get a pile of firewood and bring him there and ask him three times whether he renounces his faith. If he refuses, burn him. If he consents, do not believe him. Burn him, burn him all the same, burn him into ashes!'

"If you measure revolutionists by what they have suffered for their faith, then we are the real revolutionists. We lived in hiding for two hundred years, in remote and savage regions, the Southern Steppes, the Caucasus, Turkestan, Siberia and the Altai Mountains. Under Catherine the Great, that woman with a Teuton soul, German customs fast in-

creased and Germany fastened her hold on us all. Against these ominous changes we Old Believers fought like men, and in punishment our churches everywhere were sealed by the law. We had to pray in secret rooms, or else to build our churches high up in the mountains, deep in the forests, or far out upon the steppes.

"But all this made us pioneers. To survive, we must be strong; and we found that a man is not strong by himself, but only when he joins with his fellows, each one helping all the rest. We had been brought in contact with simple people everywhere, and we studied all their methods and they taught us self-support. On their methods we improved, and so in time we grew and thrived.

"When we came to a place, we brought commerce there. We started a vast farming on the Volga steppes down in the South; and we started a steamboat service there, the first to be seen in Russia. We also were the first to use naphtha as fuel instead of coal. An Old Believer long ago invented the steam engine, before your American, Watts, was born. A whole chain of our industries sprang up on the left bank of the Volga. Carefully developing each industry from small to great, our motto was always, 'Slow but sure.' We started cotton spinning in Russia. From our ranks came the famous Morosofs and most of the other Cotton Kings. Read the list of the most noted Russian manufacturers and farmers on a tremendous scale, and you

will find that more than half of them belong to our Church.

"My relatives own and manage big flour mills down in the South. They use the most modern machinery, and I love to study their work. It is a fine and wholesome thing for a churchman to understand machines; for we live today in a machine age. How can we minister unto men unless we understand their work, the thing that absorbs them every day?"

Then he himself grew absorbed in machines, and talked on with deepening eagerness.

"For the flour mills," he said, "I consider that Tantz in Budapest, and that Wolf in Magdeburg, have been making the finest engines; but there are some almost as good now being made in Switzerland. The English are too conservative. They won't use super-heated steam to lessen the consumption of fuel. Your countrymen do better. Your American reapers and binders are being used by our Cossacks all over the steppes down in the South. One of these great Cossack farmers owns 100,000 desatinas (about 250,000 acres) of the very best black soil; and with your American machines, he turns over to wheat alone 10,000 desatinas a year. He has also started a model experimental dairy farm, with over 700 cows; but there your machines gave poor results, and he is now buying from Denmark instead.

"So our people have worked in the South. Down there you may travel for hundreds of versts

and see only the wild grass of the steppe — but then suddenly you will come to an Old Believer colony; you will find it like an oasis there; and you will feel that the best prayer to God is to turn a hundred desatinas of wild land into rich fields and orchards.

"At first our farming suffered from the dry climate of the steppes. To remedy this we tried the system of sub-soil packing, invented by an American whose name is Mr. Campbell. This was a help but not a real cure. For myself, I had deeper faith in the process of slow irrigation. In Egypt fifteen years ago, I closely watched the English way of inundating the fields from the Nile. But I was strongly against it. When the waters subsided, they left a hard crust which broke the roots of the tender young plants. So when I came back we invented a hoe which makes a deep narrow crevice in the soil and so lets the water come in very slowly. The soil imbibes it as it comes, so that there is no hard crust on top, and the earth underneath is just right for the plant — at the minimum consumption of water.

"In 1903, we started large scale experiments on this plan — with the result that one desatina of irrigated soil, which formerly had yielded from 15 to 20 poods of wheat of a standard of 27 zolodneeks, the next year yielded 117 poods of a standard of 37; and in the succeeding year, 125 poods of a standard of 42. The expense of irrigation for each desatina was from eight to ten roubles for teams and ditching, and about four roubles more for the special hoeing

required. The entire expense was more than paid back from the first year's produce."

I listened in fast increasing surprise. What was this man? An archbishop, a farmer, or an engineer?

"I have no doubt," he continued, "that over on your American plains you have worked out a wonderful system of irrigation. How I should like to go there and see exactly how it is done! But I have little time to travel. I made that trip to Egypt because Christ, the Great Brother, was exiled there, and I wished to see where he had gone with the Madonna in her flight. Then I went to Bethlehem, and my sinful mortal eyes saw the place where He was born; and I was most indignant that they had converted the spot from its old simplicity into a mere place of show in order to tempt the travellers. But then I swam in the Jordan and felt new blood flow through my veins. Most of all was my soul impressed by the infinite calm of Mount Olive. I sat there at night looking up at the stars, and was struck by the absolute silence. I felt the vault of heaven was so much deeper in that spot, and the stars were so much brighter. At times I thought that I heard a sound as of Wise Men coming from the East.

"On that trip I asked myself, 'When we remember the Carpenter, how can we have any contempt for toil?' St. Paul was a sail-maker; the other disciples were plain fishing folk. And that is how we must plan our lives. We must teach our people the

very best and most scientific farming; they must have healthy, normal work; because this is the way to make them like Christ.

" One of our finest village priests is a huge man, a blacksmith; and he is a farmer, too, and besides he keeps forty hives of bees. His wife can tend them or the farm just about as well as he. And by all their work, as well as in Church, they are teaching that village how to live. The priest loves books, especially if they are of a practical kind; and from such books he takes the juice, the very life, and then mixes it in with his own experience — and so teaches all the rest. And he is a priest that Christ our Lord would love as a brother if He were here. For such work leads to brotherhood and the true happiness of men.

" In Egypt I went to the Pyramids, and saw those useless monuments; and I felt that the worst of the Pharaohs was that they had used infinite human toil on unproductive labour. This was why their armies of slaves had to be flogged to keep them at work. For at building useless things the spirit of a man rebels; but real productive achievement stimulates any mortal on earth.

" And so it must be in Russia today. Productive work is what we need, and it is there that you can help. So I am trying to decide how the Old Believers, with all our great farms and industries, can be used to bring your American business, industry and invention into close touch with Russia in the

months and years ahead. There is no use in mere sweet words about being brother republics. To do business, we need not words but deeds!

"How to make Russia really free? This cannot be done by words alone or even by mere political changes. We need a deeper freedom that goes into life itself. And we are the Old Believers who have always believed in that. We fought against the changes that brought slavery to this land. When they began by making the Church the slave to their autocracy, like the prophet Samuel we warned the foolish people who were eager to have a king. And because we gave this warning, we were burned alive and flogged to death. But still we stood against the Czar. And we said in our proclamation last spring, when the Revolution started,

"'The Czar cannot emanate from God. A Czar or a king or a kaiser, all are pagans — all alike. Robbery and aggression are the children of autocracy. This strong imperialistic robber hunger is the force that made Germany wage this bloody war against the whole world that wants to be free. Therefore, brothers, we must fight!' So read our proclamation. 'The Provisional Government,' we declared, 'is the only legal government now, and therefore we must follow it. We must pay all our taxes and do every service in the very best possible way. But meanwhile we must take care to elect to the National Assembly only men devoted to the best interests of the land; we must choose none who are

ignorant or selfish or dogmatic. On our choice of these men hangs the fate of our land. For now, brothers, we are to make no divine but a human institution. And yet we must try to make it divine — for this is real democracy.'

"So we believe, and so we have worked. Our followers have had no part in socialist propaganda of any kind that is unwise. For the sound part of socialism we have only liking, but so much of it is nonsense and can do Russia only harm. We do not believe in suddenly giving all power to the government to own and run our industries and our very lives as well. Just as we have kept our church and creed absolutely free of the State, so now we would keep our lives as independent as we can. And yet our goal is much the same as that of all real socialists. The difference between us is merely one of method.

"Our plan for building a nation is first to gather its citizens into small congregations like ours — which are not solely religious concerns but manage education, too, and all the vital business of life — and then very slowly, one by one, to weld all these co-operative groups into a solid body, in such a way that while each is largely independent, still it is bound to all the rest. So we shall build not only a Church but a State, which will be a democracy of co-operation and brotherhood."

He took us into his bedroom, a most severe little chamber with a narrow iron bed and a plank floor

only a foot from the earth. Here he lived, summer and winter alike. On the log walls, on every side, hung many sacred ikons.

"These ikons," he said, "are all to go to a new monastery of ours, where the monks will work on a great model farm, and so will not only support themselves but will teach all the people around them the best ways of tilling the soil. Co-operation is our idea. Our works of irrigation are only another form of it, and they have met with huge success. So we shall spread the plan through our life — to work together as brothers and then divide the produce in shares. Nothing hasty, nothing wild. In a steady, practical way we shall form joint stock concerns for farming and for industry. Co-operation and brotherhood — the world is coming to that in this age. If you don't keep up, you are beaten. And we shall not be beaten; for like freedom, so, too, co-operation is a part of our old belief.

"This faith of ours is like a seed which has had no chance to grow. But we guarded it deep down in the ground, until now at last when freedom is here our seed can spring up everywhere. It shall be scattered far and wide. Our eight million Old Believers are already in every part of the land, not only on farms but in the towns. We are in no hurry. We want strong men. A few such recruits are better than many eager weaklings. One-fourth of us are Cossacks. Over half of the Cossacks belong to our Church.

"Many Russian workingmen, in the present revolution, are drawn towards the syndicalist view. And syndicalism is dangerous. It would have the ignorant workers seize the factories and mills and try to run them — all at once. And this would mean ruin and chaos; all Russia would be dark as night. But the quiet brother of syndicalism is co-operation. And in the months and years to come we shall lead the workingmen away from the wild to the quiet brother. We shall seize nothing; but year by year we shall bring the workers together into industrial brotherhoods, to buy and own and operate every industry in the land. This is no wild impractical dream, but a plan that fits the Russian mind. Did you know that in the last ten years the co-operative societies have gained twelve million members? And remember that these represent about sixty million men, women and children. Such has been the response in ten years; and in this the future of Russia lies. For co-operation suits the Slavs. And real co-operation leads to the Brotherhood of Christ."

## CHAPTER V

THE mightiest and the deepest force in that whole distracted land lies in the "dark people" who living in their villages have not yet made their voices heard. But they make the Russian nation, and they will make its government. And because this is not a matter of months but of years, perhaps a generation, that is no reason why we should dismiss them impatiently from our thoughts. The times that we now live in are so dangerous, so critical, we cannot afford to be impatient. They have not been so in Berlin. Their agents have been in Russia for years; in the government, in the industries, in the schools, in the press, in all parts of the land. They are there today and will be there still, in all probability, working through the years to come. And if we in our impatience of muddle and confusion now leave Russia to her fate, then we shall be blind indeed to the cause of world democracy.

If the people of Germany liberalize their government, so much the better for all of us. But if the present war should end in a negotiated peace, in which the Prussian despotism is only half shorn of its power for harm, and if then we leave the Russians to work out their salvation alone, without our powerful friendship — it is by no means unlikely that little by little, year by year, through treaties, trade and in-

dustry, Russia, split into many parts, may be drawn under the German yoke, and the basis thus be formed of a Slav-Teuton empire so terribly vast and resistless that the future will be black indeed for liberty lovers throughout the world.

I do not say this is bound to happen. Far from it. The Bolsheviki, or some other radical government, may be able to weather the crisis there without any aid from our country. But how unsafe to count on this! Why not do everything we can to find out what the Russians — all the Russians — really want; and then see if we cannot help bring it about, in a way that will mean not disaster but progress and real liberty? Both in actual relief supplies, and much more in the work of organization, the Russians need help; and they will get it — either from us or from Germany. No other nation among the Allies is so well liked in Russia as ours. We are in the position to help them. And in order to aid the people in towns we must help the peasants, too; for they will not give up their grain to the starving towns and cities, until they can get in return not mere money but actual goods, which for them are dire necessities. For this reason I doubt if the Germans, even though they be able to maintain peace with the Ukraine, can get much good from the peasants there unless they can offer in return not cash but the things the peasants need.

In addition to more land, the peasants want farm

machinery, ploughs and tools, and cotton goods and leather — and later, practical farming schools. On these things I found them all agreed. I talked with peasant delegates from the southern provinces; I visited many villages in the centre and the north; and I heard from them all the same demands, with only slight variations. For the lack of these things they were sick of the war and sick of the revolution. Last summer, as the new government proclaimed and proclaimed, month after month, and still did not meet the peasant's needs, he grew bitter toward the government. Disgusted with the cities because of the disorders there, he made up his mind to stick to his village, grow his own flax and make his own clothes. Roubles, he said, were worthless, for they could buy him nothing now. But bread he could eat, and bread he would keep until the towns starved and so came to their senses.

In Petrograd, although I was stopping at one of the best Russian hotels, often in the morning the waiter would come up to my room with the cheerful tidings, "No sugar today, no butter, no eggs, no milk." And he would set before me a pot of clear bitter coffee and a small chunk of soggy "black bread." But when I made trips to the villages, in the huts of the more prosperous peasants I would be regaled by my hosts with white bread, milk and eggs and butter. I would fatten on the land for a time, and then would return to my meagre life in that starved elaborate hotel.

Not only was food scarce in the towns, but the people were dreading the winter with the low supply of fuel on hand, especially in Moscow. For as a rule the Russians use stove wood to heat their homes. And although out in the country the peasants had not yet seized the forests, they felt that these forests would soon be their own; and therefore in many districts they refused to cut even fire wood for the towns and cities.

"Why should we work to warm the towns, when the towns won't work to give us clothes?" said a big black-bearded peasant, in whose hut my interpreter and I were having tea one morning. "I can't dress my children in roubles," he said. He clutched a handful of paper money and regarded it in disgust. "But those devils in the towns," he added, "can't feed their brats with roubles, and so they are worse off than I; for my wife has fixed up her old spinning wheel, and now she will make all the clothes we need, and I can make boots out of bark. So we will keep our grain and eat our bread, and let those devils in the towns starve until they go back to their mills and factories and make the things that they can trade to us for grain. That's how it will happen.

"But if they don't do it before next summer, it may be too late for all of us. We can get along without cotton and leather, but I must have a new plough by April. Look at that plough." And he pointed to an old one out in the muddy yard. "It is twelve years old and no good at all; and the worst

of it is that in this devil's war they have taken one of my horses and left me only one runt of a horse, and now for him I can't get any shoes and his hoofs are going all to pieces. We must have ploughs and horse-shoes, and nails and wagon tires and new hoes and shovels, too — or else we cannot till our land, and there will be such a famine in Russia that many millions of people will have to give their souls to God."

This view of the situation was confirmed wherever I went, by those who knew the peasant best. Many urged that America supply these farming implements; and one who was an expert on progressive farming, urged that we do more than that — something that would vastly help to solve the deeper problem, the scarcity of arable land. For in Russia are millions of acres of virgin soil that is not being used. Some of it is swampy and more of it is overgrown with shrubs and little saplings. And there, he said, we could render a service that would plant our country's name forever in the peasant's heart. Why not plough up this virgin soil?

"Send over an army of tractors," he said, "and let them start work early in April down in the rich Black Belt in the South. In a line of about two thousand miles let them work slowly up with the season, offering to plough everywhere the land that now yields nothing. The peasants will gladly pay for the work. Send American machinists along, and we'll supply Russians to help them and also to explain to

THIS PLOUGH TURNS A FURROW ONLY THREE OR FOUR INCHES DEEP

the peasants. The peasants would go nearly mad with interest and excitement. To see your great caterpillar ploughs tear through the shrubs and saplings, would be to them a miracle!

"They would watch your machines do in an hour what they themselves do in a week. They would see your ploughs turn a furrow twelve or fourteen inches deep, instead of the four-inch furrows to which they have been accustomed. This sub-soiling could be explained to them — the advantage it brings in a double yield. The work could be made a great demonstration, an education in modern farming. The peasants would never forget it. From that time on, they would club together in co-operative societies — as they have already begun to do — to buy tractors and other improved machines — probably from America. And half our land problem would be solved.

"Incidentally, the Russian press would run the story of your work. It would be a national sensation — and sensations are just what we have learned to expect from your countrymen. We would be greatly pleased with ourselves for having sized you up so well. We would say, 'We were right about them! Their land *is* full of Indians and buffalo, Fords and Edisons — just as we thought! Big sensations! Here they come!'

"The Russian peasant would never forget. He could be told not only of tractors but of stump-pullers, harvesters, reapers, milking machines — and

of your American farming schools and the work that your government does for your farms. And he would like America! And the German propaganda here would be to a large degree offset. For the way to reach the peasant's mind is not by fine words of friendship but through land and machinery."

These are the things that absorb them most. As a rule, when we talked to them of the war and of the revolution, of politics and the elections for the coming National Assembly, the peasants were apathetic. More than once they yawned in our faces. Plainly they were sick of all that. But then I would draw out from my bag a huge old tattered catalogue with pictures of American ploughs and reapers and other implements, that I had picked up in Petrograd — and instantly they were different men. Alert and keen, they fired their questions one upon the other, pell mell; they wanted to know of every detail. And then each would talk eagerly of the things nearest to his heart — more land and better machinery. For in these two things, not in politics, he saw the real freedom that he craved — freedom from unending toil and the darkest poverty.

How is he to get more land? It is a knotty problem. Simply to take the private estates will do the peasant little good unless he has the implements and the knowledge required to till what he gets. And how is it to be divided up? Or shall it be held in

common? And how is the land they already own to be re-divided in such a way as to avoid the present waste of labour and time?

The land of the peasants, as a rule, is divided into long thin strips; some of them barely ten feet wide. This is common all over Russia. The land is held by the village; and about once every generation, the village Mir (community body) meets and argues for many days, and at last each peasant gets his strip — or more often, several strips in different parts of the district. And this is his till the time of the next division some twenty years hence. Between each strip is a "frontier" from one to two feet wide, and this of course is wasted. There is also the waste of time and effort by each peasant in tilling his several holdings. One plot may be a mile to the north, the other half a mile to the west, and a third in some other direction. Some of these plots are so small they recall a room in a New York apartmet. Moreover, the plant discourages individual enterprise; for what is the use of my breaking my back to keep out weeds and thistles if the fellows on both sides of me let their weeds and thistles grow?

About ten years ago, the government, in order to remedy this waste, issued an edict allowing each Mir to divide up the land permanently among the individual members. This was tried with more or less success in several parts of Russia, so that by the outbreak of the war many thousand peasants owned

their farms and were able to buy or sell land as they pleased. Many of the thrifty ones had farms of a hundred acres or more.

But in the larger part of the country the old system still prevails, and the socialists are relying now upon this communistic plan as a stepping stone to their larger scheme for national land ownership. The Bolshevik extremists propose, like the Social Revolutionists, that the nation shall take over all the private land estates, from the largest to the smallest, without compensating the owners, and shall then lease it out to the peasants for life — the rent either to be paid direct or else through taxation.

The peasant will doubtless agree to this plan, so long as it gets him anything. But he will be very slow indeed to give up anything he now holds. For his hard and meagre life in the past has made him clutch what little he has and yield not a jot to his neighbour. A socialist land surveyor last summer, working for the new government, told me how in three villages he had been called in to decide disputes. In each case the peasants had mowed the grain on the private estates. So far, they had worked like brothers. But when it came to dividing up, the haggling had soon led to blows. They had gone at each other with fence rails, and limbs and ribs and heads had been broken. In each case they took his advice and returned to the private owner the grain which they could not share with each other.

In the past, in the average village, when about

once in twenty years the time came to divide up the land again in order to adapt the shares to the changing peasant families, it took endless haggling. In deciding how much each one should have, both the quality of the soil and its distance from the village were the determining factors. And in judging of the soil, the average peasant would take up a handful and taste it, and nod his approval or else spit it out. Land is a passion with him. In a very literal sense, his life depends upon it.

So it is, too, with the women. And when the revolution granted woman suffrage, all over Russia the peasant women suddenly awoke to the fact, and used their new power to make one, and only one, demand — land for their daughters. Hitherto in the village divisions the land had been allotted according to the number of male children in each family. Now, declared the mothers, every girl must be counted in!

These Russian peasant women have always worked on the land with the men; but since the beginning of the war, they have been doing double their share. And this, together with the vote, may change their attitude toward the men. When their husbands come back from the war, they may find their suffragist peasant wives not quite so submissive as before.

More land and better machinery — these are the peasants' first demands. And after that, they want practical schools. For the " dark people " are hun-

gry for light, and they want better lives for their children.

We Americans can help them there; for if in the new distribution of land they do as our States did years ago, set aside a certain amount of the land to endow free education, they can found on that endowment an immense network of farming schools and colleges and model farms like those so successful over here. We should invite them over here to study our ways and methods. And yet, in all such friendly advice, we must not force our methods upon them. I remember a peasant in the north, and also a little woman school teacher, both of whom showed keen interest in what I had to tell of the schools at Gary, Indiana. Both the peasant and the teacher seemed to grasp the point at once, that here was a place where children learned by actually *doing* things. But with the peasant as well as the teacher, our talk had not continued long before I found them eagerly changing the Gary school plan by emphasizing its garden side. For their boys must learn to be farmers.

So, in any practical help or advice or information, we should adapt our methods to theirs. We should study the Russian peasant until we come to understand not only what he really wants but how with his peculiar ways he is most likely to get it.

. . . . . .

In order to give some better idea of how the peasant thinks and feels about the land and the revolution, I shall try to set down here the gist of a long

conversation I had with a peasant in Central Russia.

With my interpreter I had come from Moscow several hours by train to spend Sunday in an old monastery and to explore the country near by. The place was some twenty versts (thirteen miles) from the railroad. At the station where we left our train, we found a half dozen peasant carts and low open cabs; and we joined with a few other travellers in bargaining for a rig. We singled out a little man with sandy hair and scraggy beard, keen blue eyes and a high shrill voice. His rig had one low seat behind and a small narrow seat in front for himself. His horses were mere ponies. The dappled one was in the shafts, and the brown one ran along on the side tugging on traces made of rope. Shafts and harness, wheels and seats, all were sadly dilapidated. We haggled long over the fare, but the peasant held out for twenty-five roubles — about five times the price he would have asked before the war. A sad expression crept into his eyes, but his small jaws were set like a vise. At last we gave in and accepted his terms; and squeezing into his crazy rig, off we started up the road.

It was an open rolling land of wide sweeping vistas. Between us and the setting sun I saw on a ridge, in black silhouette, a peasant with a plough and team — one of the great "dark people." How could I ever fathom their thoughts? I glanced at our peasant driver. As he took us through this

country over which he was soon to have sway, what was going on his mind? He drove with his sharp blue eyes on his horses, giving only brief replies to the questions of my friend. To draw him out seemed hopeless. But luckily my interpreter was skilful at this sort of thing. Himself a small landowner, one of the more radical kind, he was accustomed to dealing with peasants; and so by degrees he edged his way into our driver's confidence. Meanwhile I watched the country.

In rude little carts and wagons and ricks, whole peasant families passed us on their way home from the fields — for the peasants do not live on farms but gather in small hamlets. I noticed how few men there were. The women seemed to be doing the work. In one rolling meadow a young peasant mother, who looked hardly more than a girl, was sturdily pitching hay onto a rick that was drawn by a pony led by a boy so small we could barely see him. They had doubtless been working all the day. Now it was after nine at night, but the sun had not quite disappeared. We passed many villages, mere groups of six or eight log huts, with low thatched roofs, small windows and carved window frames of white or blue. Again we passed a drove of sheep, and then a herd of cattle — the tall thin peasant lad behind them flourishing a drover's whip with a thong nearly fifteen feet in length. This thong would writhe out like a long black snake and would make a report like a rifle shot.

Some men and boys passed us on a cart, shouting and singing, very drunk on the vile wood alcohol with which the peasants here and there had replaced the forbidden vodka. This was not, however, the usual thing. In my country trips last summer, these were the only drunkards I met; whereas, before the nation went dry, you could hardly pass a village without meeting peasants reeling along. I remember a village in 1905, where I saw a huge peasant in front of his stable bellowing like a bull gone mad and lunging at his horse with a board — reeling, stumbling about. And I recall a young girl and a woman who lay in a gutter side by side, giggling inanely.

"If Russia keeps out vodka," I was told last summer, "that alone will be worth the price of the millions of lives we have lost in the war."

We stopped to pay toll by a river bridge, and the toll man charged us forty kopecks for our two small ponies. My interpreter laughed and objected that such runts of horses ought to cross the bridge for half fare. The toll man, who was a tall heavy shouldered peasant with reddish beard, smiled and grimly answered,

"In the Russian market at present, my friend, even a very little horse is rated higher than a Czar."

We crossed the bridge, and soon we were going through an immense and shadowy forest of birches, firs and pines. The trees had been planted in regular rows, so that the eye was taken down long narrow avenues into the dusky depths of the wood. It

belonged, our driver explained, to a certain Count B——. He had barely ever come here, we learned. His estate had been run by a manager.

"We used to cut his wood for him," said the driver in his high shrill voice. "We could not live on our land alone. We should have starved and died like dogs. So we used to cut wood for the Count. He sold it to the Moscow mills — where they used wood in their furnaces."

My interpreter was getting on. Careful not to probe too deep, his questions at first were all about the conditions of soil in the neighbourhood. It was not good land, the peasant said, it was mostly clay and sand. He added that in this district they used the common rotation of crops — the first year, leaving the ground fallow; the second, planting oats and barley; and the third, potatoes or rye.

"We'd like to sow clover, too," he said, "because we know it's good for the soil. But we have not land enough — we can't wait — we need the grain."

My interpreter asked him why they did not use the waste land that we saw on all sides.

"To drain it with ditches and pull the stumps," said the peasant, "would cost us nearly as much as to buy new land." He turned with a sharp jerk of his head. "Why are you so interested in this?"

My friend replied by telling of his own pet plan, for peasants and small landowners to throw their land together, in a co-operative society, buy improved machinery and till the soil henceforth on

shares. As he talked, we happened to pass a fairly large brick building with a row of sheds behind it.

"There," said the driver, "they tried to start a plan something like yours. The peasants got together in winter and made willow baskets there, and then divided what they earned." It was one of those co-operative societies of peasants which in the past decade have risen by tens of thousands in every part of Russia. And as elsewhere, so in this case, the scheme had met with great success. It had been started, our driver explained, by the district Zemstvo (a small legislative body) which in that district was made up of the more progressive landowners. The peasants had soon grasped the idea, and they had worked hard and had made quite a profit. But later, when the war broke out, it had taken most of the workers away, and both of the teachers, who were young men. So the place had been shut down.

For a long time our driver was silent. Then he began to inquire, in the most minute detail, just what my companion had done on his small estate for the better culture of the soil. Among other things, the latter described how he had cut his straw for the cow stable into small bits by machinery, because in this condition it absorbed manure better.

"That's all very well," said the peasant grimly, "but I have no cows. My two horses are always hungry, and restless in the stable, and so they cut up the straw with their hoofs. But if I had cows

I would try it. Go on and tell me some more of your tricks." And again he plied his questions.

"But most of these things," he said presently, "need good tools and machinery, and we can't get any now. You bargained and bargained with me for my rig, but how could I come down on my price? Before the war, to shoe my horse cost me one rouble and fifty kopecks. Last month I paid twenty-eight roubles, and besides it took nearly a day of my time; for the blacksmith had to look all about for a few bits of old iron, and then it took him four hours to weld the bits and make the shoes. And to get a plough or a harrow repaired is an awful job. After the war, I am hoping it will be a little easier; but even then it will take a long time, and things will get worse before they get better. We have an iron famine here. For horse-shoes, tires, axles, nails, and new parts for my plough or harrow, I used to use about sixty pounds of iron a year; but now everything has so run down that I shall have to get everything new. It will take me years to get it. And I am like all the rest. As I drive along I talk to the peasants, and they are as badly off as I.

"The Zemstvo says it will help us soon, but the way it distributes tools and ploughs is very slow and clumsy. Their agents come along by chance, when they have an hour of spare time. And often, even before the war, we would go to the Zemstvo store in the town and find the man out, and so we would have to go instead to the private merchant. He

was never out, for he worked for himself. The Zemstvo man was out for a stroll, because he worked for the government. It was the same in the co-operative store in our district town. Even a hard worker, when he lands a job like that, soon gets fat and logy. I know one who put four inches of fat on his big ribs and charged it up to the rest of us."

I suggested as a remedy that the agent should be paid a low wage and then given commissions on his sales. When this was interpreted to him, the driver gave a sharp jerk of his head.

"That's a good idea," he said. "Make the fellow earn commissions or starve. Your friend from America has a head. Tell him he comes from a business land. But those American business men send us machines that are made of cast steel. That's fine for them, because it is cheap; but it is not fine for us at all. We need steel which, when it breaks, can again be welded together. In one of those American ploughs, if any part breaks, we can't fix it, and the whole plough goes to the devil!" With this he dismissed me out of his thoughts and went on with my interpreter.

"You use a good many new methods," he said, "but I know a thing or two myself. I have two saws and planes and chisels — one German chisel worth nothing at all, and one English chisel that is very good. The American chisel is so hard you can't sharpen it when once it's dull." For some time he talked on about his tools. Then he turned

around abruptly, and after a sharp, quick look at my friend, he declared:

"Now I will talk right out to you, because I see you are a practical man. I don't like to talk to a fellow who knows nothing of practical things." He heaved a deep sigh.

"This is how things are with us," he said. "Most of us get enough from the land to feed us till the first of March; and we add to that by work in the forest. There, what we own in common we cut into stove wood for ourselves; and besides, we hire out to Count B—— to cut his wood. But since the revolution, no firs or pines are allowed to be cut, either on his land or ours. We ourselves decided it. For such timber is good for building, and we may soon own it all ourselves. We will not go against the law. If he wants to, he can come here and take an ax and cut his trees; but none of us will help him." He clucked to his horses and drove along. Again he began abruptly:

"How about these Bolsheviki?" he asked. My interpreter tried to explain, but the peasant was a poor listener. His brief remarks revealed the fact that to him the "Bolsheviki" were not only the Lenine group, but Kerensky, too, and all the rest of the government. "Some of those fellows came here," he said, "and told us to burn the land-owners' houses and take all their property. But we were too smart and saw their trick. Two were Jews from Petrograd, and one was a lady doctor.

We saw that they were friends of the Czar, and wanted to get us to riot, so that they could bring in the Cossacks and get the Czar back over us. We are no such fools! When the revolution started, our youngsters got ready to do such things, but we put a stop to it; and now we have decided to wait till the big Assembly meets. We expect any amount of good from it." Here again he heaved a sigh.

"But most of us older fellows are sick of all this politics. Some of those Bolsheviki keep going around in the villages and getting young peasants into their crowd. And every Sunday they ask us for five or ten roubles apiece for the needs of their new land committees. Worse yet, they rob me of my time. In the last two weeks, four or five times they have sent for me, and have kept me waiting half the day before I could even turn in my money. They kept talking and talking around a big table, and some were writing and sweating so hard you might have thought they were getting in hay. What do you think of such chatter?"

He asked what we did in America, and I tried to explain to him how even in our country, with no revolution on our hands, elections are complicated affairs and take a lot of time and talk. He listened with keen, attentive eyes. Then he interrupted me:

"In the Moscow town elections last month, I was there and saw crowds in line to vote. They have given the vote to women, too, and one old she-devil stood there in line with about as much sense as an

old blind horse. Then a fellow came and asked her, 'Have you got your number? Without it you can't get into the polls. Here is one. Give it in at the door.' And he gave her, not a number, but the ballot of his party." The driver winked impressively. "And I think they will work the same kind of tricks when it comes to the big Assembly. We are dark people and don't understand; and besides, we are so sick of it all we will vote for any party, only to get rid of the job." The peasant scowled as he drove along.

"Your American there, in his travels — what government did he like the best — German, French or English?"

I told him I preferred my own, and started to tell him what it was like. But he yawned and again interrupted:

"Well, I don't know how I would feel, for I never went further than Moscow. But about our Russian government, I know one thing very well. Before the war, when I went to Moscow I carried my money in my hand and brought back a whole armful of stuff I had bought — while now I take an armful of money, and what I bring back I can carry between my thumb and finger." He cracked his whip impatiently.

"And we will not give our grain to the towns till they show us they can handle themselves, and get to work and make things we can buy. Why should we do all the sweating, while they just sit on park

benches? If a political party came that would make the wheels go 'round, and give us the things we really need, then all of us peasants would think hard and try our best to vote clearly. But as it is, I am like a man in a deep forest without any paths."

Here we passed a small estate of about three hundred acres. The old yellow frame house was boarded up and had a gaunt appearance. On the field was a wretched crop of oats.

"Many barins (gentlemen) have lived in that house," the peasant remarked, "and they have failed, one after the other. Now the last of them all has sold it for an orphan asylum. The house was built when I was a boy, by a barin from Moscow. He had six horses and eight cows. So he started — but soon he gave up. He left, and everything went to seed. That is the way with our barins from towns. They come and don't know how to farm, and lose all they have and then go back. They are of no use to themselves or to us.

"Count B—— has done somewhat better. He is a Pole who married an heiress in order to get these forests of hers. Then he took her to Paris, and left a student manager here, who tried to graft apples on fir trees, and in fact performed quite a number of such city college tricks. But at least in the Count's forest the trees are planted in regular rows; and that is good because it saves space. We should do the same in our peasant woods; but we don't know how to plan together, and so when we

meet to discuss the thing we can get no decision at all — because no peasant before he talks knows what he is going to say. He just opens his mouth and out it comes; and when it is said, it is even worse than he himself expected."

On every side we began to notice clearings filled with rough old stumps, and our driver remarked that this land would lie idle until the old stumps had rotted away. "Only our great-grandchildren will see the new trees to be planted," he said.

My companion asked him why they did not pull the stumps.

"How do you do it?" the peasant inquired, and my friend began to explain the special machine he used for this purpose. The driver gave him a sharp look. "Is that what you did," he asked, "or only what you read in a book?" My companion told in detail of the work. "How many horses for such a machine?" the other demanded.

"I have a tractor," said my friend. And he went on to explain the many uses for a tractor on a farm. The peasant listened with interest.

"I have never seen one yet," he said. "But often when I watched automobiles go dashing about with fine barins and ladies, I thought what a miracle it would be to have such power on the farm. But what chance have we of getting tractors?" he demanded bitterly. My interpreter said that the government was planning to import them, but the peasant shook his head.

"Nothing will come of it for us. The government is still run by land-owners, and they do not care at all to make farming any better for us; because if we should raise more crops the prices would drop, and so they would lose on their own estates. That's how it is in Russia. Sometimes I hope for all such things, but then I say to myself, 'What's the use?' You never get something for nothing. Suppose we take the forests? Then when we go there to work, we shall get no more wages; and if there is any profit, it will be taken away in taxes. Count B—— will lose, but we won't gain. Instead of cutting wood for him we'll be cutting it for the government. We'll swing the axes just the same and get no more than we're getting now.

"And there is another point. Everything always costs more when it is done by the government — and so our taxes will be raised — and besides, there are war debts to pay. And I tell you there is not a chance of our paying higher taxes! Take my own case — look how it is. If I should break an axle, it would cost me forty roubles. It costs thirty roubles to shoe each horse. And oats are dear and crops are poor." He drove for a few moments in silence. Then suddenly he brightened up.

"I raised bigger potatoes this year," he said, "than any one else in the *volost* (township). I did it by a special hoeing I have thought out all by myself — and I have told the secret only to two of my best friends. To all others who come and look at

my patch, I say it's because I have better soil."

My interpreter protested that such secrecy was no way to get better farming in Russia. The peasant replied by questioning him as to his own potato fields. The man seemed rabid for information. In a few minutes he sighed and said:

"In Moscow, at election time, the streets were covered with papers like snow, and the sewers were clogged with the stuff. And all were political proclamations, just big words and nothing else. Why not have used all that paper and ink to describe such good farming methods as yours, and all the new machinery and how we are going to get it? Those would be proclamations worth while!" Again he was silent for a time, and then added gloomily: "For without a tool a man can't kill a flea; and yet the barins expect him to till the land with his finger nails.

"We need tools and better schools," presently he began again. "I don't like the school in our village, for it teaches no real things. When I want to teach a boy how to plough, I take him to the field and do it — and so it should be with everything else. What good are books alone to a boy? How can you expect him to learn a thing unless he can see it and do it himself? These teachers from the cities know nothing at all of any real life. One girl teacher from Petrograd taught at our school a while ago, and at first she wanted to rent my cow to get milk for herself and her mother. But one day at

sunset on my field, she saw a young calf, and she said to me, ' I will rent this dear little cow instead. She will give quite enough milk for me! ' " The peasant gave a solemn nod. " And that is the kind of a teacher," he said, " they send to teach farming to my brats! " He heaved a deep sigh. " I told her," he added sadly, " that perhaps a cat would do for her."

He stopped talking, for now his horses were trotting fast down a long, steep hill to a river-bed, and they needed all his attention. He kept muttering to himself, and once he looked anxiously at his wheels, which rattled and creaked as though ready to smash. At the bottom he drew up abruptly.

" This is as far as I'll go," he declared. In vain we remonstrated. It was already getting dark, and we still had two miles to go to reach the monastery where we hoped to spend the night.

" I can't help it," he said. " You can walk. Look at that devil's hole ahead." And he pointed to a long muddy stretch along the river bottom. " If I tried to take you through, there is too good a chance of breaking my axle. If I did, it would cost me forty roubles. So I'll tell you what I'll do — I'll take five roubles off the fare."

We argued, but he was obstinate. We paid his fare and he gave us directions how to reach the monastery. Then he turned his team into a side lane, and soon he had rattled away in the dusk.

Luckily we had no bags. As we trudged through

the mud on the low river bank, up on the darkening fields to the right I could still see weary women at work, although it was after ten at night. At last we left the river, and climbing a winding path up a hill we came through a dark grove of firs out onto a clearing. Here stood the shadowy monastery, in a great enclosure surrounded by high, massive walls. Through the wet grass along the walls, we explored in the dark in search of a gate. Finally, rounding a corner, we came upon a ponderous door; and in answer to our pounding, soon it was opened by a monk. But when we asked for shelter, he said that they were packed full for the night, and he told us to go to the village near by.

"There you can sleep in a hut," he said.

The door clanged to and again we started. A light rain was falling now and it had grown very dark. From the dense woods as we tramped along, there came occasional voices, bursts of laughter, snatches of song, and now and then a rifle shot. And the narrow, winding road seemed like the way of Russia's life, in these turgid and chaotic times. When at last we came to the village, the huts on either side the street were silent, dark and baffling. I had grown weary, very cross. I was thoroughly sick of Russia that night, sick of its gloom and confusion. The whole nation seemed to be out in the dark.

But suddenly, from a hut ahead, a bright light gleamed out of a window.

## CHAPTER VI

MY friend went up and knocked at the door, and after a moment a little woman with bright black eyes appeared with a candle in her hand. When told of our wish, she hesitated, then said she could give us a place to sleep.

In the hut the air was heavy and hot, and the log walls literally crawled with flies. There were two small rooms. In the kitchen, by the window was a table with a dirty cloth, on which stood a lamp and a tall brass samovar; near by hung a ragged curtain concealing the pots, kettles and pans; and there was an immense square stove of white tile with a platform overhead where the family slept in winter. The stove extended through a partition into the small room in front. There we found a little girl asleep on a mattress on the floor; and on a long low chest by the wall, an old woman with bare dirty feet lay on her side, wheezing painfully. The windows were shut, it was stifling, and we asked if we could not sleep in the barn.

The little woman said we could, but insisted on giving us supper first. Tired and hungry, we sat down, while she bustled about in her bare feet. In the tall brass samovar she soon had the water boiling, and into it she dropped six eggs — three for

each of us, she laughed, because that was a holy number. She made tea, and brought out an earthenware jar of rich cool milk, a pat of fresh butter and a loaf of dark brown bread, or " black bread," as they call it. In the other room, the old woman snored. The lamp sputtered and burned low, and in the semi-darkness I noticed now a tiny light before the ikon (holy picture), which hung in the corner. Our hostess lit a candle and placed it on the table, and then she poured our tea for us and sat down while we had our supper. When we asked her to join us, she said with a smile that she was too tired. She had been mowing from early morning until ten o'clock that night.

" My bones all ache in such a way that I don't want to eat," she said. Her low sweet voice was husky, and from time to time she coughed. She looked stunted by work. Her small breast was flat and her shoulders stooped, she had big over-developed arms, and the nails were worn half off her stubby little fingers.

But she was not too tired to talk. When she heard that I was an American, her small black eyes grew doubly bright. She threw out rapid questions, she wanted to know all we had seen. Each moment her excitement increased. On her narrow face, with its sharp little nose, the colour heightened; and with her eyes on my Russian friend, she was soon talking eagerly of the war and the revolution, and what it had meant in the village life.

MARKET DAY

"Everything in Russia is so mixed up, these days," she said. "The army is in a terrible state. I think those leaders were to blame who told the ignorant soldiers, 'You are all the same as generals now.' For they broke all order down. Now many deserters keep coming here, but they go at night past the villages, and by day they hide in the woods. They know we do not like them!

"And we are against the people in towns. They give us nothing that we need for our great new life in Russia! Here we are not starving yet, but the work on the fields grows worse and worse. We have hardly any ploughs and tools; and besides, our peasants do not know how to do best with what they have. We are dark people — we must learn. Here we are with all Russia in our hands, and we do not know even how to begin!

"But we will never return to the Czar! The good God granted him twenty-four years to rule over us — and every day, what a chance to do good! He did nothing — he made promises only to take them back again — to tease the dog! But the peasants are not dogs. They have waited and waited till now they are sure — and we shall never take him back, no matter what he promises. Gifts from a warm hand are good, but from a cold hand they mean nothing at all. And the Czar is dead in Russia!"

She leaned forward in the candle light, and talked on so rapidly it was hard to get our questions in.

Now it was after midnight, and the room was fearfully hot. Flies buzzed and crawled all over the table and upon our heads and arms. In the front room the old crone woke up, and her frouzled head appeared in the doorway. She muttered something angrily, but her daughter laughed and said to her:

"Don't expect all strangers to be bad. If you think they are good, they will treat you well."

"Not in these days of the devil," the old peasant woman growled, and I could hear her climbing painfully back upon her bench. Again and again she muttered and wheezed; and at last she shouted, "Take those barins out to the barn!"

Her daughter quickly assented, and led the way in her bare feet down the road and across a field to a row of a dozen little log barns. And there until nearly daylight, we sat on the log sill of her barn, while in true Russian fashion she poured out her very soul.

"I have been all alone," she said. "I have never had a chance in my life to talk like this to any one — and I may never have it again. I want to tell you *all I can!*"

She went far back of the revolution into the life of the great "dark people," and her own life here as a child. The rain had stopped and a big pale moon hung over the trees on the river bottom. She coughed and coughed, then hurried on. Her story did not come out all at once, but in disconnected passages, for her memories of the past were mixed in

with her thoughts of the present, and with her groping into the future that the revolution would bring. I shall try to piece it together here — but I can give only the facts. I cannot give the passion that was in her swift low voice and in her black eyes as they turned to the sky.

I was born in the same hut where we live. That was thirty-one years ago. I am always glad when I hear my child laugh, for I laughed so much when I was small. My mother beat and scared me, but my father was my friend. The bitterest tears in the world, he said, are the tears of children — so they should be made to laugh instead. When she beat me and I cried, he would take me away to the fields or the forest, and there he would always quiet me.

" Just see how good everything is," he would say.

He worked alone from morning to night, and in such a peaceful way that the neighbours thought him weak-minded; but often when they got into a fix, they would come to my father and he would always help them. He would never listen to all the little scandals that go about in a village like this. When they tried to pry into his life, he said, " My stomach is not a glass bottle, so don't try to guess what is there." He said if you treat people kindly, they will do the same by you. He made me glad to obey him and try to guess ahead what he wished. I know that often I guessed wrong — but it made

no difference, for he would always tell me, "That's exactly what I wanted."

There were no boys in our family. I was one of three girls and my father's pet. When the work was done he liked to take me into the forest; and we would sit and listen there. Sometimes he would tell me stories.

Many hundred years ago, he said, the peasants used to kill their old men in order not to feed them. This had become the law of their land. But the sons of one old man loved him very deeply, and so they hid him in a cave and there they took him food at night. One spring he said to them, "My sons, the summer season will be wet, so plant your seed on the mountain side." His sons obeyed, and their neighbours laughed. But the rains came and the valley was flooded, while the crops on the mountain were saved. The next year, the old man said to his sons, "This summer will be very dry. You must plant in the swamp." And so they did, and their neighbours laughed. But the summer's sun burnt up the land, and only in the cool wet swamp was there any yield of grain. Then the peasants begged the sons to tell where they got their wisdom. The sons said they would tell who the wise man was if the peasants would ask him to come there and live. And the peasants promised, and then the sons brought their old father down from the mountain, and he was the teacher for all the land.

"And so it is," my father said. "It takes a long

life to make a real teacher, for only out of life itself does any real teaching ever come."

He told me all about the forest, the bushes and plants, and the grain in the fields. He made the whole world seem full of life, although he himself was so weakly. He taught me to pity even the women in the village *kaback*. I used to peek in through the garden hedge and see the women at tables there drinking and laughing or sobbing and shrieking — and I would shiver and run away. But one night I found one of them flat on the snow. She was frozen nearly stiff — so I brought her home — and there was a fight between my father and mother. She said it was a shame on us to bring such a creature here; but my father said it was good, for the woman might have frozen to death. He said that men and women like her were not bad but only unfortunate people, that poverty like a load on their heads kept pressing them down into the mud.

All such people loved him; and so did the beggars who sang holy songs by the door of the church. They said that my father was a man who need not have any fear to die, for the kingdom of heaven would open wide. How proud he was when he took me to church for the evening service. There we had a favourite song about the mild light of the glory of God.

The beggars' prophecy came true. One very cold day in the forest, while my father was cutting wood, he took off his sheepskin shuba, and his breast was

pierced by the wind. So he grew very sick in his lungs. As he lay in the hut he knew he was dying; but he said it was all for the best. When he was dead, the tall old priest who was there at the bedside turned away very slowly and said,

"I have never seen so quiet a death."

I was very lonely after that. My mother and sisters disliked me, and made it hard for me in the hut. With my father gone, it was dirtier than it had ever been before. All the work went badly and we soon grew very poor. I hated the slapping and quarrelling; and now when I ran away to the forest, no one sat beside me there. I used to go to the village school, but I did not like the books they had. The stories were so soft they made me feel like a fat rich lady patting a dirty little child. I knew the world was not like that. But I had a good friend, the manager's wife on a big estate, and she said:

"Go to Moscow. I can get you work as a servant there."

I was only fourteen, but I went alone. I had a birch-bark basket filled with bread and eggs and cakes, salt mushrooms and cucumbers. I wore bark shoes and home-made clothes. My uncle and my mother drove me to the station, and I was ashamed when they begged the conductor to take me without any ticket. He put me into the baggage car and called me a nice little morsel. It was my first ride on a train and I thought it would be wonderful — but the train men made it nasty. They joked and

looked at me like wolves — until one of them said, "She is too young." He was very kind. When we came to the city he carried my box and basket to the house where I was to work.

It was a very fine old house. Behind it was a court yard with rows of huts along the sides, where in the old days of the serfs had lived the shoemaker, the carpenter, the baker and all the other serfs, brought in each fall from the country estate. Now all were gone, but there were many house servants still. I became a lady's maid for two girls of about my age. They made me do their hair for hours, and chattered in French with each other and laughed in such a silly way. And although I was given good food in that house, I soon got sick of always doing only such silly little things. I made friends with a girl in a dress-maker's shop, and one night she said to me:

"You are all right now, but you will never do any better. Come into our shop along with me."

I chose a very lucky night to tell my mistress I wanted to go, for she had just come from the theatre and was singing and smiling to herself. And besides, she had always liked me, because I never stole. If I wanted to be a dress-maker, she said, she would pay my fees and put me into a dress-making school.

I went to that school for many months, and I got on very quickly — not because I was clever but because I was eager to learn, and I had my father's

methodical ways. I lived with my mistress still and worked for her as a seamstress — until the family went to Paris. Then I went to the dress-making shop with my friend. All the girls there were friendly to me, but what an empty-headed lot! They chatted and sang from morning till night, and I could not see what it was all about.

Then a strange thing happened. When I lived at the rich lady's house, a young student who used to visit there had often tried to talk to me. Each time I had grown very red, for I was only a servant and he was the son of a Moscow priest — and so I had run away down the hall. But now he came to me in the shop. One day when I was carrying a dress home to a lady, he met me and walked along by my side. And he said,

" You are smart. You could get up in life. But you need to marry some one in a class above you."

He made me feel he would marry me. But I grew cold from my feet to my neck. I told him I never would be accepted by such fine people as his friends. And I said,

" Don't speak of it any more! "

But still he came to see me.

Then a letter from the village arrived. I had not been home for nearly two years, but now the deacon begged me to come.

" Your mother is weak," he wrote me, " and your sisters have no heads. You must come home to manage. Besides, you are sixteen years old, and it

would be very bad for you to get older without a husband." At the end of his letter came the usual greetings: "Your mother greets you, your uncle greets you, your aunts and cousins greet you, and all your neighbours heap blessings on your head till the day of your coffin. Please send three roubles. The calf is sick." This made me laugh a little. If the calf had not got sick, I wondered if I would have had so many heaps of blessings.

Well, I went home to the village. It was spring, and my soul was set free in the great clean air of the forests and fields. But I did not feel like that very long. For from the moment I came home, my mother and my sisters looked so hungrily at my town clothes, and snatched them away and hid my purse. "We know better how to keep money," they said. They were so mean that I grew angry and said some sharp things, and then I was sorry. I felt something cold creep over me. The hut was dark and filthy, and I worked to make it clean. My mother was sick and grumbling; my sisters talked of their hard lot — growing old without a dowry.

From Moscow the priest's son wrote and begged me to come back to town. "In the village," he said, "you will lose your life." But my mother was so sick that I did not see how I could leave her.

All my old aunts and uncles now were busy searching the country to get a man to marry me, and at last a day of glory came when they announced that a man had been found who consented to make me his

wife. I wondered what he would be like. "Once he is your husband," they said, "you must honour and obey him and make his home nice." But how was I to do it? I had learned nothing but dressmaking, and I knew that the peasant wives did very little to make a home nice. When their men came home, they said, "Eat this or leave it. Our lives are so hard, there is no use in trying to cook anything well."

When I met my future husband, we looked at each other in such a queer way — as two cows coming out of a stable will stare at each other with foolish eyes. At once I disliked him, but I knew I must marry him now or shame my family. For the village women were jealous of girls from Moscow, and so if I refused him they would say it was a lie, and that he was the one who had stepped back. Now he walked around me just as if I were a horse. He said:

"Yes, I like her, but she is too thin. I would like her chest broader and her wrists thicker. Not much good for work," he said. But his mother chattered away, and his father and my uncle talked. "The business is settled," they shouted, and banged their fists on the table. Then they all drank vodka and the betrothal meal was served. I had to be careful to serve it exactly in the village style, and show no signs in all I did that I had been in Moscow.

When they handed me over into his arms, he looked at me in such a queer way that it made me think of a crabbed old miller who, after buying a

horse from a gipsy, had remembered all at once that he had not got the bridle, too; and so he had started to bargain again. My future husband looked like that — and at the thought I nearly laughed. But they all cried,

"Stop smiling! This business is just as solemn as God! Now is the time for you to weep!" And I shook all over and said,

"You are right!"

And in the next years I wept very often. It was a dark and dirty life. He made our home so filthy that I could not keep it clean. He was employed at the village store, but he worked very little there. He said, "You are my wife and you must obey me. So says the priest and he is to be trusted." He would come home drunk and make me kneel and take off his dirty boots. He would even try to make me kiss the wrappings on his feet, and when I refused he said to me, "God will punish you for your disobedience."

When my first baby was to come, something drew me back to my husband. Once when he went to Moscow to buy things for the village store, I knew when he was coming home, and so I hurried through my work and walked twenty versts to the station to meet him. But when he got off the train and saw me, all at once he flew into a rage.

"Here to spy on me, are you?" he shouted, and kicked me in the stomach so that I cried with a deep fierce pain. Later I learned that on his spree

he had brought back a woman on the train. I was in such terrible pain that when I started home I could not walk. A kind merchant in a carriage let me sit up with the driver, and so at last I reached my hut. A peasant woman helped me there — and that was the end of my first child.

My husband came home the next day, still drunk. The goods he had brought from Moscow were spoiled by having been left in the rain; and so at the store the merchant was angry. My husband said, "If you don't like my work, I will spit in your store, for I am a better man than you!" So he was kicked out of the place.

But he had a smooth way with men. When he was drinking he talked very well and made every one feel that he was to be trusted. So he soon got another place, as manager of a small estate. And for a time that was our home.

I liked it there and did most of the work. I loved the cattle and horses; and as my father had taught me to do, I looked at them as human creatures. It seemed to me that when I felt badly, from that kick that I had received, they knew how I felt and stood very quiet, to make the milking easier. There are times in a woman's life when she is ready to see sympathy on any side, from man or beast.

Now I was allowed to move in the circle of managers' wives in the neighbourhood. Those women had some funny ways. I remember one I went to see. A few minutes after I had come, the wife of

a bigger manager called; and at once I was asked politely to go into the other room, for I was not important enough to be there. But then the priest's son from Moscow came to the village for a few days, and he talked to me as a friend. After that, all the managers' wives took me in, because they felt that I was one who could go in high society. And yet this visit did me harm, for the village buzzed with scandal. My husband heard and told me that I had covered him with shame. After that I could not leave the estate unless he were with me.

So again my life was very bad. He sold my belongings and even my dresses. He would come home drunk, and would wink and say, "The reins have caught me under the tail." He would go to the cupboard and take out a dress, and I knew that I would soon see it in the second-hand shop in the village, as an advertisement that my husband was a drunkard. The village women blamed it on me because I was a girl from the town. They said kind things, but with smiles in their eyes.

My husband went from bad to worse, and so at last he was turned away. "You can do what you like," he said, "but I was made for something better than to be a slave like this." And he took his coat and left the house. At first I thought it was a joke. There was an October storm that night, and the wind like a pack of devils came roaring down the chimney. I was frightened and sick, for it was the time when my second child was coming. I was

quite alone, for even the cows and horses had been taken away. I locked the door and shook with pain. Then I thought I would go home to my family. I went out in the dark and tried to laugh, but I felt all alone on the earth that night. I kept looking for my husband, for I was so sick of my loneliness I would have been glad to see him, no matter how drunk he might have been. I looked for him in the ditches. Then in the storm I got into a swamp, and from there I must have gone into the forest. It was so black that I could see nothing. I kept striking against the trees, and I felt a dark and terrible fear.

In the morning I found the road. As I lay on the stones exhausted, some peasants who had been threshing rye all night came down the road and looked at me. And they said,

"What a shame. Now she, too, is a drunkard."

These foolish words made me cry, all at once, and the crying made me quieter.

"Now, let it be as it will," I thought. "God has turned away His face. Either there is no God at all; or if there is, the priest is a liar because he calls Him merciful."

It was a grey cloudy morning. There were muddy pools on the road, and I kept falling down as I walked. Now my body would seem to float along, and again it would be like a great dead weight. When an old woman in a hut falls from

the stove where she has been sleeping, they say that she has time in her fall to see her whole life of seventy years. And so it was with me that day. My head was full of thoughts and pictures that beat on each other and whirled about. I looked at the road all yellow with leaves, and I said, "Now my thoughts are like leaves in the wind."

When I came home, my mother said, "So your fine town tricks did not help you! You could not keep your husband!" She told me I must get to work. It was threshing time, and from our barn the peasants came in for their dinner. And when from the oven I lifted a big iron pot of potatoes, I carried it just a step or two and then I fell down on the floor. So my second child lost its chance for life.

When I got well, I started a tea-room. I worked hard and made some money, and we lived better in our home. But after that my husband came back and said that he had a right to my business. He used my money for his sprees — till at last I got sick of everything. I decided to try my luck in the town, and I went back to Moscow.

I was now nineteen years old. In the city, I went to my dressmaker friend and told her a part of my troubles. She said:

"Don't think about it too much. I know your village people. How can you blame them for being like wolves, when their lives are so dark? You

must leave them behind. To get on, you need education. Here you can go to school at night, while you are working in a shop."

And I started to do as she said. I lived with her in a little room. But in about a month or two, some Polish people that I met talked so much of Warsaw, that at last I decided to go there to live.

Warsaw was a strange place to me, but I worked hard in a dress-making shop, and soon I began to do quite well. Here nobody pried into my life, for all the people were very gay. It was a fine town with its elegant shops, with electric lights in the windows at night to show off the wax ladies there — who smiled like cows and seem to say, "See what a heaven we are in — with our corsets and dresses, our slippers and jewels!"

The girls in our shop were easy going and babbled along like so many birds. "Why do you save your money?" they asked. "Get clothes and drink and have a good time!" And they tried to get me to come with them. But my life in the village had been so dark that all this babble seemed empty talk. They used to drag me to their rooms, and there I saw that all they did was only show for their men friends. No matter how finely dressed they might be, they wore very little underneath except where it would set off the skin. And they did their hair so carefully that it stuck like glue to their heads.

There were some German girls, too, in the shop. They were so sentimental that they would sing to

"THE DARK PEOPLE"

the moon like dogs, and they were always talking of their bridegrooms back in Germany. And yet they lived with Polish men, in order to make more money for their beloved bridegrooms. For the Polish girls, to go with a man was like taking a cup of tea; but with these German shop-girls it was a solid business. They knew how to make a good home for a man, and to fill it with plants and flowers and keep the rooms clean and cook nice meals. They used potato pealers — I had never seen one before — and fine little laundry machines. I used to look at them and think:

"How much easier for us if we Russians did like that."

But still I was not jealous of this happy German life. They told me much about Germany. They have a wonderful system there to make their people comfortable — but nothing for the needs of the soul. And now in the war I often think that if we had the German system, we would all be better off — but it would be as though the heavy boot of a soldier were upon us; and that is what we would not stand. For between us and the Germans there is a pit without any bottom. We can't fill it up, nor can we cross.

In Warsaw I saved money and bought some things and made a good home. Now I had been there so many years that my Russian life seemed only a dream — a beautiful dream when I remembered the holy songs of the beggars at church, or the

times alone with my father when the whole forest was dark and still — but a nightmare when I remembered my husband. Now I thought I had left him behind.

But one day he wrote he had learned where I was and would favour me with a visit. Soon he came to Warsaw — and then I had two feelings. One was a wish to keep the life that I had worked so hard for there, and the other was an old deep feeling of my duty as his wife. When he came to my room I did not know how to tell him to go away, so instead I said that the room was not mine, but that I shared it with a friend and she must not find him here. He said,

"But I only see one bed, and it's barely big enough even for you. And here are only two small chairs. Which chair does she sleep on?" he asked me. And when I got very red, he laughed, and he stayed until I gave in to him.

He had a job as under-conductor on a Moscow-Warsaw train. There he was getting on very well, for it needed only a long tongue; and he used his tongue so nicely that soon he was made an over-conductor. Now we were living together again. Two nights a week he could be home; and this time our life went well.

The next year my baby was born. I had moved to a little house out on the edge of the city. I kept up my work in the dressmaking shop. And now everything was so nice that my husband was ashamed

to get drunk. His old habit of boasting was just the same; he talked of great people in Moscow as though they were his relatives. But that did not hurt him with the Poles, because they themselves told the same kind of lies. It was a game on equal terms, and I used to smile as I listened.

But then he grew lazy in his work and so was transferred to a lower job on a military railroad line. I was glad to be left alone, and began to plan out my whole life for my child. And one night not long before the war, I had a vision that showed me the way.

I dreamed I was back here at home on the river bank with my sister looking up at the sunset clouds, when all at once the heavens broke open like a torn sheet of paper. I felt myself float up in the sky. With me was an old beggar who had loved my father and had sung holy songs by the church. I was terribly hungry. I saw Christ sitting at a table. He was not like the pictures. He looked both wonderfully young and many millions of years old. He said, "You are hungry." I begged Him for bread. He broke off such a little piece, and I ate it and was hungry still. But He said,

"You must be satisfied with the little you received. For the little will be great."

I knew what He meant. It was my child. I must work hard for this one small life and do my best to make it great. And so I asked every one I met what good things I could find for her. Soon I

did find a wonderful place. It was a creche and kindergarten run by some good Swiss people. On my way to the shop, I could leave her there and then bring her home at night. The things that I learned in that little school about feeding and teaching children! More and more I was sure that my child would be great — for we Russians are a deep people, and there are miracles in our souls, if only we can bring them out.

But the war broke out and spoiled my life. When the Germans came near Warsaw, I went with crowds of women and children for refuge in the fortress of Brest; and when even this was about to fall, I fled away the night before. I had saved over 3000 roubles, but I could not get it from the bank; and I had to leave all the furniture and dishes and linen in my house. It had taken me so many years to get!

We walked all night along the road and kept telling each other, "Never mind. What is one fortress to Russia?" But suddenly behind us there was an awful light in the heavens and such a noise that we all fell down. The fortress had been blown to pieces. The women around me shrieked and cried. Then all at once I remembered the vision I had had from Christ; so I gathered some women and children there by the road in the darkness, and told them of my vision. And I said:

"This is not the end of the world, and everything will still come right — for Christ looks down at the

children, and He is going to make them great."

And the children all stopped crying and looked up into the sky. And the daylight came, and we walked along.

It was a hard time, for we had to walk many hundreds of versts, except when we got on cattle trains. Often we had to sleep in the fields. The children cried for hunger and thirst, and some of them drank bad water and died. But the Swiss people in the creche had taught me what harm bad water can do; and so at each hut by the roadside, I looked to see if the children there were all strong and healthy, and only then would we drink from the well. The other refugees dropped off to settle down in other towns; but I went on alone with my little girl, for in Moscow was a bank connected with the Warsaw bank where I had left my money. But when we got to Moscow they told me I could get nothing at all until Warsaw was back in Russian hands. Then I felt terribly sick with life. I had just enough money to get on the train with my baby and come back here — back to the hut where I was born.

That was over two years ago, and it has not been an easy life. My mother was very sick and old. One of my sisters had gone away, and the other had married a peasant who was a hard slow worker, but everything he did went wrong. Again I started a tea-house; and when it was going well, I left it to my sister, for she needed it more than I. I lived with my mother and took charge of our little farm.

Long before this, my husband had been coming home on leave. He tried to get the money that we were making in the shop. Vodka was forbidden, but he took to wood alcohol and got drunk. And I found he had other love affairs, and I felt it was not right to let him feel he could live like that and still come back to me, his wife. So, when the revolution came and I learned that the new government made it easy to get a divorce, I put in my claim at the court. It was hard enough to be living here, without having a drunken husband, too. I had my child to think of.

Here her story was broken off, for suddenly over the moon-lit field her mother came hobbling like an old witch. Angrily she shouted to her daughter to come home. The latter jumped up and left us, and we could hear the old woman's voice scolding as they went away. Wreaths of mist had come up from the river and there was a chill of approaching dawn. We closed the barn door and climbed up on the hay and burrowed down deep into it. For a time I listened to the mice rustling in the hay and straw. Then I fell asleep. In an hour or two I was wakened by the jangling church bells calling the peasants to early mass. I remembered it was Sunday. I slept again, and when I awoke I could hear the rain on the thatched roof. Stiff and sore, we got up and went back to the hut.

We found our friend of the night before squatting on her heels on the little log porch, cleaning pots

and kettles. Her eyes looked bright and excited still. Plainly she had been cleaning house. The kitchen was not so dirty now, and the front room had been aired. The strips of rag carpet had been swept; the plants in the deep little windows had fresh clean paper around the pots. The samovar had been polished. The frouzled bedding had been put away. The five-year-old girl had been dressed in her best, and had on a pair of black shoes in our honour. She was playing with a white kitten. Her mother had donned a dark blue suit, her hair was done up in a tight twist, and her sharp pinched features shone from vigorous washing.

But from the mother and her child, I kept glancing at the old crone in the background. With her scowls and grunts of pain, her gnarled dirty hands and feet, she seemed like an evil heritage out of the dark past behind. I could feel her constant presence here, in the dirt and sloth of this house of hers where she had lived her long bleak life. The log shed was a pool of filth, with a few bedraggled chickens and two pigs in a pen in the corner. The stench came in through the kitchen door. I saw signs on every hand of the almost hopeless fight the daughter was making day by day. I noticed again her finger nails worn half off with labour, the tragic gleam in her small black eyes. Only her little girl was gay. Here indeed were the "dark people"— past, present and future.

What was the daughter planning to do? What

had the revolution meant in this village hovel? We were eager to find out; but now she had no time to talk, for she was back in the daily grind. The rain made it urgent to stack her rye, and with the peasant man next door she was bargaining for the work. There was some ploughing, too, to be done; but he pulled the crazy little plough out of the shed and showed where it was broken. She tried to get him to patch it up, but he said it was useless. Soon she was getting dinner. She begged her mother to let us stay, but the latter angrily declined. As we left the hut, the three of them were sitting down to tea and black bread, and boiled potatoes which they ate out of a big iron pot. We resolved to come back and see her again before we left that night for town.

The rain had changed to a drizzle. It was a large village, with lanes running off the main street on each side. The town was half way down on the muddy river bottom. On a low ridge of hills near by stood the grey old monastery; and farther off along the ridge were two large houses of private estates, one yellow and the other white with high wooden pillars along the front. We heard that both were empty now. We passed the village school house here, a log hut of two large rooms. In one, some small boys were chattering; and in the other, the stout woman teacher sat at her tea. Her fat heavy swarthy face did not look very inspiring.

Again the church bells were jangling. Peasant carts and wagons came slowly by; for although this

was Sunday, it was the monthly market day. We followed them to the market square, which was in a great muddy hollow, with a white frame church at one end and a tea-house at the other. Along one side were a few little stores and open stalls; but there were few goods from the towns in these days, and so there was only a meagre display — some house utensils and bales of cheap cloth, some clumsy home-made wooden rakes and a few other farm implements, coils of rope, a few pair of rough boots. In one stall was a tiny wooden horse, and a little peasant boy was gazing wistfully up at it. When my friend bought it and gave it to him, the urchin was off like a rabbit, laughing convulsively as he ran.

Out in the centre of the square were two long lines of ricks and carts laden with hay and vegetables and potted plants of flowers. There were a few small cows and calves. Under a big umbrella was a woman at a pushcart filled with boxes of coarse thread and buttons, pins and needles, and a little gaudy jewelry. The peasants were dressed in high top-boots and old clothes sodden with the rain. A few wore sheepskin shubas. The women's shawls and calico dresses were bedraggled. As they stood in their bare feet in the mud, two were comparing absorbedly their potted plants of flowers. I heard a gramophone blaring in a small shop near by; and I went in and purchased a box of cheap candy for the little girl in the hut.

Then we went to the tea-house for dinner. It was a long building of grey old logs. The restaurant was on the second floor, and was entered from a porch to which steep wooden steps led up from the ground. The porch was crowded with peasants, and the three low ceilinged rooms inside were filled with dirt and clamour; the air was a perfect swarm of flies. Along one wall there was a bar where formerly vodka had been served. Now they were serving tea and soup. The peasants were seated at small bare tables. They had brought along their own black bread, and raw carrots, turnips and cucumbers.

The rooms were jammed with family parties; for on this festival day of the month, coming in from lonely hamlets, they had brought the children along as a treat. In the soup were chunks of meat, and happy little boys and girls were blissfully chewing away at this meat as though it were candy. An old grey bearded giant sat in gloomy silence there. Most of the women were in white shawls. There were a few soldiers in the crowd. Every one seemed to be talking at once; and there was to me a tonic force in this harsh babel of voices; in these people who, in spite of the dreariness outside and the hard bleak lives they were leading, were so tremendously eager here, with such throbbing deep vitality. I wanted to stay and learn how they felt toward the revolution; but already looks of suspicion were thrown at us from every side.

"I could not get them to talk," said my friend. "If I tried, it might make trouble — not only for us but for the woman who took us in. We'll do better to go back to her hut and learn of the revolution from her. She can speak for all the rest. She is no average peasant, but women like her are scattered all through the Russian villages, and on just such figures depends the fate of Russia in the years ahead."

So, after making a hasty meal of soup and boiled pork and potatoes, we went back to the woman's hut to finish our talk of the night before. On the porch we found the little girl sobbing in her mother's arms. The child's playmates in the hut next door had said, "We hear your mother got married last night to two fine barins in the barn." And then they had laughed and jeered at her, and she had run home. But now at sight of the candy, all her troubles vanished in air. Each chocolate, she discovered with awe, was wrapped in fancy paper. She began to arrange the pieces carefully in a row on the floor, while the white kitten looked on solemnly. Meanwhile, we sat down to tea and continued our talk with her mother.

What did she hope to make of this life? How did she look on the revolution? We were eager to find out. But we did not talk of that at first; we preferred to let her do her own talking, and it all centred about her child.

This village is a wretched place for my child to grow up in, she said. A little girl should keep her soul just as clean as a dress that is new. But you see how her playmates put such shame into her head. The whole village is dark with scandals of the very dirtiest kind, for here girls only ten years old run out with the boys at night. I am trying to think what to do with her. My mother is so old and sick I cannot leave the village — and the school here is so poor.

All our village schools are poor, and the new Russian government has done nothing to make them better. These new political parties, in spite of their talk about freedom, still work for the people in towns, and all their plans are based as before on getting things out of the peasants. They won't give us good schools because they want to keep us dark people all our lives. They have built fine houses and they have filled their cellars with wine. I have seen how they live, for I have been a servant. And all their fine things come from the labour of people who live in huts like me. They spend their whole lives in silk dresses, going to theatres, dinners and balls. Why can't they bring their fine knowledge to us and help us to be cleaner and better, to cook and sew and look after the sick? Why not sell their automobiles and spend the money on good schools?

They are clean and warm and in elegant clothes, so they laugh and think that they are safe. It is just as if, although living in a country filled with disease,

they said, "We at least have not caught it yet." But they will find it is dangerous to live in such a country! How many millions of children are growing up to be savages! And this darkness of the people may last for generations still, for Russia may settle down as before. Now is the chance, and they let it go by! One year lost now may utterly spoil a whole generation of children. In a year in this village, my child may lose all the fine start in body and soul that she got from those good Swiss people. There must be no dark gap like this in her life!

These political men have talked so much of what they are going to do for us, and they never see that our deepest hope is to be taught to do things ourselves. They promise us billions of roubles. Where from? Shall they drop from the skies? We know that true money is hard to earn. They may print millions of paper roubles, but my three kopecks won't grow to be six. The only miracle in the world is one that comes very slowly. It comes with new wishes and habits that grow up in the people themselves, beginning when they are children.

This miracle is in us all. I take my crop to the market and speak to men and women there, and hear little that is wrong, for I turn the talk to sensible things, and when you drive in such channels you find good in every one. All at once their dirty chatter stops, and out of their mouths come words at times so wise that it is wonderful! I tell you they do not need to be dark! All they need is schools — *real*

schools! In our school here is a fat dull teacher who works only out of books. We pay her only twelve roubles a month, and she is not worth even that. So they say we don't pay teachers well because we do not care for schools. But that is a lie! If the people in the cities would send us the kind of teacher we need, we would pay our last kopeck to keep him here, and then he would teach us how to work!

We need not always be like this! Look at me — I am a peasant woman, but I am not quite a fool. When I look at these pictures you show me of farming machines in America, I see that if I had them I could get much larger crops. But who brings such machinery here? Nobody! They should bring them! They wave red flags and tell us to work, but how work when we have no good tools? You heard my neighbour talk of my plough. It is so bad, it breaks his back. I have tried to borrow one, but my neighbours hide their ploughs, for they are afraid that the extra use will wear them out. This selfishness is the blackest spot in all our people's darkness. We must learn to help each other work. That is the spirit we must have — because only then will new machinery be any good for our village.

The moving pictures in the towns and in the larger villages, which show only dirty stories now of murders and all sorts of crimes, should be used instead to give pictures of what a Russian farm could be. When we saw such things we would go at once to

our Starosta (village leader) and tell him to go down the street and knock with his stick at each window. Then the Mir (village assembly) would meet and we would collect the money, and send and buy these good machines. You say one of them will mow in a day five desatinas (twelve acres). I have only one desatina of rye, but it takes me three or four days with three or four women to mow it; for we have only little hand scythes and have to kneel on the ground to work and cut the grain by handfuls.

And all that time I have to leave my child with the old granny here, who scares her by the things she says. The child does not know whom to obey, and what each one of us tells her is all mixed up in her small head. With machines, I could be much more at home. I could keep the hut clean, and raise vegetables and even a few flowers here. I could help in the school. And I would do it; and so would the others. I have talked to so many peasant women, and so often I have found that they had the same idea in their heads — though they said they never got it clear until I talked it out with them. But then all at once how eager they were! The things we would do if we had more time!

We would learn to work together. In one big pot the gruel cooks better than in many small ones, and so it would be in all our work. By joining together we would get, not cheap little ploughs that easily break, but fine ones of the largest size. And we would rearrange our land. Don't you think we

understand what a waste it is for each of us to have his little strips of land, with the wild borders in between spreading weeds and thistles? We must throw it all together and work all of it in shares. But that is not an easy thing, for unless we are careful the lazy ones will not do their part. We must find a way to make them work. And to do these things, we need more time, and wise men to teach us. That is what I mean by schools!

Then you would see the whole country change! The other day, at sunset, I sat on the river bank — and I saw how beautiful were the clouds with the sunset colours on them. Then I looked down on the ugly earth, and I thought how much better it would be if in place of waste land and muddy swamps, you could see only waving fields of grain. The earth would be beautiful as the sky!

And so it will be in Russia soon. For we have waited long enough for the barins (land owners) to lead us. Their homes could have been like houses of light in this place of outer darkness — but they never made them so — and now at last their chance is gone, for the great revolution is here!

But what a terrible waste there has been! What a start the revolution had — and how they have disappointed us! For years we had believed in them — for the revolutionists in the towns did really come to the villages and work for all the people. Long ago in Moscow, I met a student on the street. He was between two gendarmes. I heard that he had

spent five years in prison because of his love for the people, and now he was being sent far off to a prison in Siberia. And yet he smiled at us on the street. I saw what a good, true man he was — and I was glad, I was very glad!

"Here is what we need," I thought. "True friends who will tell us what to do!"

And I often thought of him after that.

So, when the revolution came, I joined the village committee that was to manage our affairs. Every minute I could spare from my work I was writing for the committee. We wrote down all the peasants' names, and whether each had paid his new dues. We looked into the books of the church, we chose a gendarme of our own, and we elected delegates. We worked often all the night, but I never felt tired. I was glad! I thought that the new government would soon tell us all we should do.

But instead of that, their political parties quarrelled and fought. And this was wrong! There was good in each of them, and they should have taken only that. From the Bolsheviki and the Cadets and all the other parties, they should have picked out what was good, and then put it all together and made one big party for the good of Russia. They should have told us, "Now work hard, and win the war, and save the revolution! And this is just how you must do it!" If they had said that, how we would have worked! For what a spirit was here at the start!

But fine words were not enough. We wanted real work, and it did not come — and all the great spirit went out in the dark. First they lighted the torch and then blew it out. Some of us here kept trying to help, but we could feel the people around us pulling us down. For such people are like a field poorly tilled. It gives a thin crop which clings to your skirt and pulls you down, so you cannot go on ploughing in order to make a better soil.

So all over Russia things are confused and nothing goes well. And this is the trouble now in the war. It is not the soldiers' fault. They never know what is happening to their families back in the villages. Their government cannot make them sure. This does not mean we must give up the war. We must win the war! But how can we win? We must care for the women and children at home, so that the soldiers will know they are safe. We must get deep strength from God. And then you will see what armies we'll have! I am sure this will be so, for if you wish hard for a thing and work, then the thing will happen. At work on my fields I have thought it out. I remember what my father said:

"God is not a great man in the clouds. He is a strange, bright miracle that lives deep in the spirits of every man and woman on earth."

We must let this deeper spirit rise up in the darkness of our souls. We must make a new free Russia now, and there must be no delay. The Czar must never come back to us. The barins (land

owners) have lost their chance. We shall not need to take their lands; for they have no workers now and their fields are so idle and worthless that they will soon be sick of them. So all their land will soon be ours. And the merchants and politicians in towns must learn that they depend on us. They tell us they will send no tea unless we send our grain to the towns. Let them keep their tea! We can do without it, but the towns cannot live without bread, and we will send none until they see that their very lives depend on us. Then the best of them will join with us, and we shall take the government, and plan and work for a better life in every village in Russia!

And the women will do it as well as the men. I will tell you why we must vote with the men. It is all because of children. For in raising children, women and men are equal, they are united by God for that; and to do it best they must not let their boys and girls lead dark and dirty lives. To raise a good crop of children is like raising a crop of rye. First you must see that you have good soil — I mean good schools and houses. And if it is the first thing in the world to make the children fine and strong, then men and women together should decide how we can get all these things the children need — better schools and homes, more land and machines, and many good laws for our life. Women care for these things as much as men. I often think that we care more — I mean we would if we only knew.

But we are the dark people. We Russian women bear *so many* children, but only a few of them live to grow up. We have been beaten by our husbands and never given any chance. The Church has said, " Obey your husband "— but I think that both the wife and husband should be like one soul, living in two bodies, but thinking, feeling and working always for the children — and not only for their own but all, for only so can theirs get what they need. This village will always be bad for my child until all her playmates get better, too.

I tell you this because I know. All summer while I worked on my field I have been thinking all this out. I have learned what our people need, and I have seen what I need myself. The revolution has shown me.

Until it came, I never dreamed how much I needed education. I want to know better what to do and how to get better control of my thoughts and angry feelings. I have told you only what it is I want to be, but I have not told you what I am — how I scold and fly into a temper, how cross I am to my mother and child, how impatient with my neighbours — and worst of all, how I lose my hopes and for days and nights go about with a scowl. But I know that if I could have had a good education as a child, I would never have been like this!

As it is, I have to hunt in my mind for my thoughts as though they were lost in the dark. I work on the fields and I know I am thinking, but nothing

seems to grow clear to me. Sometimes I am not even sure exactly what I am thinking about, and so I go on with my work. But then suddenly, like a flash of lightning in the night which shows you just for a moment every house in the village, so my whole mind is lighted up!

It is strange what we all have in us, and what we would be if we had the chance! That is the one big miracle. When I remember those days and nights when the revolution started — the light that was in the peasants' eyes — then I know that God is in all of us. On the fields I often believe that He is in the cattle, too, and in the very grain itself when it waves in the wind. And if we can learn better ways to cultivate not only the grain but men and women and children, too, then the wonderful God that is in them all will rise up toward the sun.

And there is no good in the revolution — there is no purpose in our life — unless this miracle shall come to everybody's children. When it comes to all the children on earth, that will be the Great Revolution. And that is what the women will care about even more than the men.

We left her late that afternoon. From the crazy little rig in which we were to drive to the station, I looked back and saw her standing on the porch of her hut. In front of her was the small girl, gaily waving a good-bye. And behind her in the doorway stood the dark old woman of the past.

I wonder what they are doing tonight? I wonder if through all these months she has been able to hold to her faith, her struggle with the darkness? What are she and her kind doing in thousands of villages all through the land? What is Russia *really* doing? Under all the turmoil there, what tremendous forces that mould a nation's destiny are working in the silent waters — fathoms deep beneath the storm?

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